Chronicles

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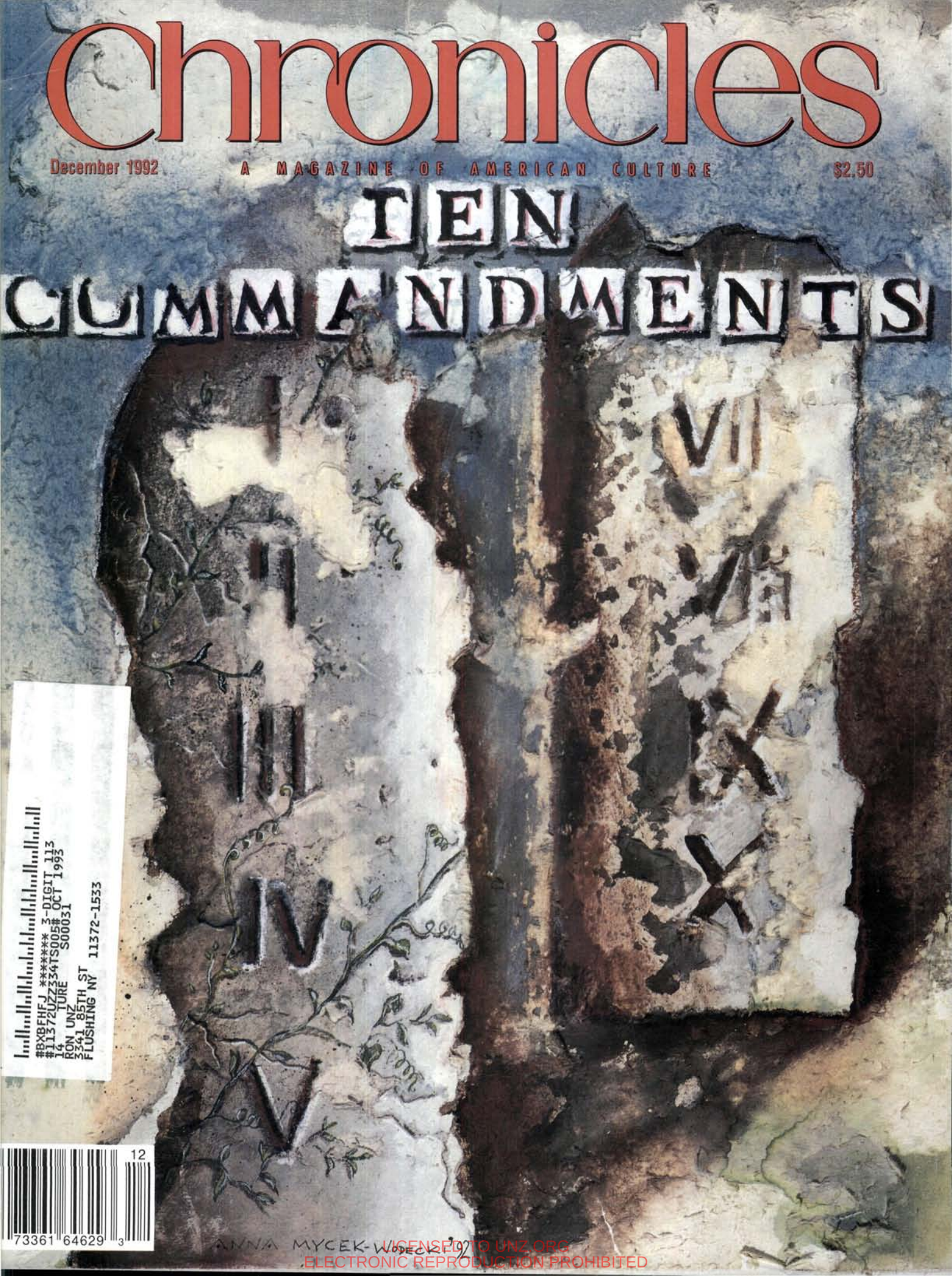

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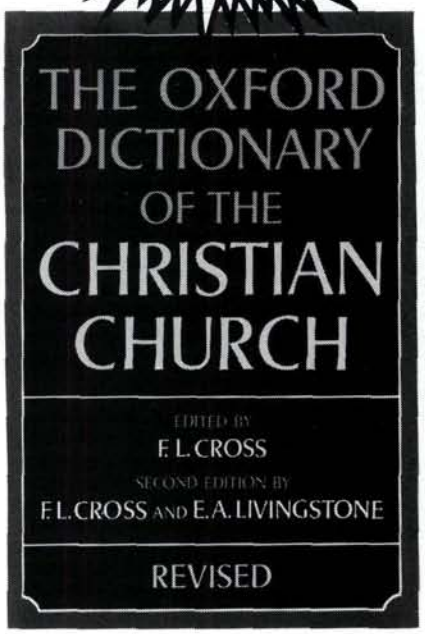

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MANAGING EDITOR
Theodore Pappas

SENIOR EDITOR, BOOKS
Chilton Williamson, Jr.

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
Christine Haynes

ART DIRECTOR
Anna Mycek-Wodecki

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
John W. Aldridge, Harold O.J. Brown, Katherine Dalton, Samuel Francis, George Garrett, E. Christian Kopff, Clyde Wilson

CORRESPONDING EDITORS
Janet Scott Barlow, John Shelton Reed

EDITORIAL SECRETARY
Leann Dobbs

PUBLISHER
Allan C. Carlson

PUBLICATION DIRECTOR
Guy C. Reffett

COMPOSITION MANAGER
Anita Fedora

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Rochelle Frank

A publication of The Rockford Institute.
Editorial and Advertising Offices:
934 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103.
Editorial Phone: (815) 964-5054.
Advertising Phone: (815) 964-5811.
Subscription Department: P. O. Box 800,
Mount Morris, IL 61054. Call 1-800-877-5459.
For information on advertising in *Chronicles*,
please call Rochelle Frank at (815) 964-5811.

U. S. A. Newsstand Distribution by Eastern News Distributors, Inc., 1130 Cleveland Road, Sandusky, OH 44870.

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Chronicles (ISSN 0887-5731) is published monthly for $24 per year by The Rockford Institute, 934 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103-7061. Second-class postage paid at Rockford, IL and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Chronicles*, P. O. Box 800, Mount Morris, IL 61054.

The views expressed in *Chronicles* are the authors' alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Rockford Institute or of its directors. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

Vol. 16, No. 12 December 1992

On 'Homeschooling'

Help! *M'aidez! Salve!* While perusing your excellent September 1992 issue, I was horrified to see two articles espousing inaccuracies about homeschooling.

First, E. Christian Kopff. In his article "Ignorance and Freedom," he repeatedly states (without any source) that "'Bible-believing' Christians are strongly opposed to learning [Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and German] and allowing their children to study them." This is news to me. My *Big Book of Home Learning*, one of the standard resources for Bible-believing homeschoolers, includes *four* chapters on resources for learning foreign and classical languages. Many of the programs I reviewed are also widely advertised in homeschool magazines, which largely cater to Bible-believing Christians.

I also object to Anita Evangelista's essay. The burden of this article appears to be that homeschoolers, dullards that we are, force our children to sit for hours at school desks filling out workpapers and breaking for new classes at the sound of a bell. As the author of eight books on homeschooling and as someone who is in close touch with homeschoolers from around the country, I must say that I have never met even one homeschooler who meets Mrs. Evangelista's description. If anything, homeschoolers tend to be *too* fond of "unit studies," meaning unpressured time spent researching areas of personal interest, often with the sketchiest parental guidance.

The article is filled with other inaccuracies as well. To name just three. First, Mrs. Evangelista says that estimates as to the number of homeschooled children range between 10,000 and 200,000. Actually, knowledgeable estimates range between 200,000 and 500,000—the "10,000" figure dates from ten years ago. For example, *Teaching Home* magazine alone has a data base of over 200,000 homeschooling families, many of whom are teaching more than one child. Second, she claims, "Not all government districts 'permit' homeschooling." In fact, homeschooling is legal everywhere in the United States, although the conditions under which it is legal may vary. See the Home School Legal Defense Association's publication *Home Schooling in the United States: A Legal Analysis*, which includes the actual statutes for each state. Third, she claims that state mandates require homeschooling children to be "subjected to tests of their ability to memorize certain 'official' facts." Even in Missouri, her own home state, this is not true. The Missouri law specifically states, "Nothing in this section shall require a . . . home school to include in its curriculum any concept, topic, or practice in conflict with the school's religious doctrines." Missouri, like many other states, allows families to document their homeschooling efforts by maintaining either "a plan book, diary, or other record indicating subjects taught and activities engaged in," "a portfolio of samples of the child's academic work," and "a record of evaluations of the child's academic progress" (which does not necessarily mean national standardized tests); or "other written, credible evidence equivalent to [the first three options]."

I also object to the use of John Taylor Gatto's credibility and ideas (used, as far as I can tell, without his permission) to blast all homeschoolers who are not ideologically pure unschoolers and extreme libertarians. If John Taylor Gatto thinks homeschools, in Mrs. Evangelista's unhappy phrase, are "perpetuat[ing] some of the public schools' greatest failings" and are "in the process of creating . . . a permanent underclass," let him write a *Chronicles* article himself. If not, quit using him like a ventriloquist's dummy.

I object, too, to Mrs. Evangelista's Marxist tactic of dividing homeschoolers into "educationally correct" and "educationally incorrect" camps. Let's get clear about this—the vast majority of homeschoolers would fight to the death for the right to homeschool any way they want. With bells. Without bells. With desks. Without desks. In real life, most homeschoolers use a combination of techniques, ranging from unschooling to "living books," to textbooks and workbooks, to unit studies, to apprenticeships, etc. The pros and cons of the different methods are vigorously debated in the homeschooling press. None of this openness of thought and practice

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is reflected in this shallow and deceptive article.

—*Mary Pride*
Fenton, MO

Dr. Kopff Replies:

Mary Pride writes under the misapprehension that my remarks about "Bible-believing Christians" were aimed at homeschoolers, many of whom, I agree, are attempting heroically to salvage their heritage and America's future. They represent a goodly number in absolute terms, but only a small percentage of America's Christians. My generalizations were based on some four decades of attending church services and Bible classes in different parts of America and on a more recent survey of local schools. Mrs. Pride represents *la crême de la crême* of America's middle class and yet she can write "Help! *M'aidez! Salve*!" The French she intended is "*aidez-moi*," though she might have tried "*au secours*." "*M'aidez*" are syllables that might appear in a French sentence, *e.g.*, "*Vous m'aidez à comprendre la profondeur de l'ignorance du peuple Americain*." For "*salve*," which means "*ciao*," Mrs. Pride meant to write "*salva*," which, however, is not classical Latin and usually means "save" in the Christian sense, not "help." There are several ways to say "help" in Latin, *e.g.*, "*fer mihi auxilium*." I use the plural for the French and singular for the Latin because Mrs. Pride does. Is there a meaning to this *variatio*? It takes a paragraph to explicate the amount of error and confusion packed into three little words. I can see only one future for an urbanized, industrial society whose educational standards have sunk this low. You can see it, too, on the evening news, when they show pictures of Somalia.

Mrs. Evangelista Replies:

I have great respect for Mary Pride and her efforts on behalf of homeschooling. Therefore, I can only assume she has defended homeschooling from government bureaucrats for so long that she has misinterpreted my article's intent and purpose. At no point did I suggest that homeschoolers were "dullards," that *all* homeschoolers used enforced routines, or that I favor Marxist tactics. In fact, I homeschool my own two children, ages 12 and 10.

Though Mary Pride insists none exist, I have met homeschoolers regionally and in Southern California who fit my descriptions with frightening accuracy. The article's intent was to point out these homeschoolers' error of following public school *processes* while eschewing public schools. As to the accuracy of my figures: since there are no headcounts of homeschoolers, it's ridiculous to argue over numbers that cannot be proven. I seriously doubt that a magazine's data base (of subscribers? people who have written to ask a question? families that homeschooled for a semester and gave up? anybody who showed up at a homeschool convention?) is a legitimate count of anything other than its data base.

Homeschooling, for many state and local governments, is a questionable activity that the state allows parents to undertake with the state's children, *but only when parents agree to meet the state's requirements*. It's not "legal" in the same way that growing a garden is "legal"; that is, a personal decision outside of state control. It is naive to assume homeschooling has been accepted at any level of government as an inherent "right" of parents. In fact, Mary Pride herself clearly describes Missouri's restriction and regulation of homeschoolers, as I stated in different terms in my article ("State mandates require that parents record the time that their students spend on various topics and keep test papers and representative samples of the child's accomplishments"). Should state scrutiny of a child's records indicate the child falls below minimum state educational levels, a charge of "educational neglect" could follow. (I know one homeschooling family of seven that was harassed by social workers for two years for this reason.) In Mary Pride's estimation, homeschooling is "legal"—even if parents have to meet outlandish requirements, such as declaring their home a "private school" and registering it with the state. This is not "legalization"; it is a grant of *permission*. Permission can be withdrawn.

The use of John Taylor Gatto's excellent essay as inspiration for my article does not require his permission; quotation of his writing is covered by "Fair Use" provisions of copyright laws. As an author, Mary Pride should know this. Her criticism of Mr. Gatto, an innocent bystander, is unwarranted.

Finally, if the use of "bells, desks," or other techniques are "vigorously debated" in the homeschooling press, it's an indicator of critiques and doubts about the validity of various homeschooling practices. Since that's what I did in my article, I only request that Mary Pride grant me the same access to free speech and a fair hearing that she gives other homeschoolers.

LIBERAL ARTS

PRO-LIFERS ABORTED

An anti-abortion billboard reading "Welcome to Austin, the Abortion Capital of Texas" was recently removed from Interstate 35 only three hours after it was erected, because employees of the advertising company that owns the billboard space received death threats.

Christopher Danze, founder of Austin Citizens Against City Funded Baby Killing, the group that sponsored the billboard, was disappointed—yet not surprised—that such a move was necessary. While the organization's sign was meant to inform citizens that Austin is the only city in Texas that funds abortions with tax dollars, Danze "had expected there to be an attempt [to remove the billboard] by some group."

Bill Horn, general manager of the firm that leased the advertising space to Danze's organization, said his company received over 100 calls in response to the billboard, some of which were threatening. He felt it was the wording in the advertisement that caused the controversy. "[It] depends on the content of the copy, not the issue," he stated.

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WHAT DO YOU GET if you cross six Catholic bishops with five "Christian feminists"? The answer: economic ignorance and cultural lunacy. In what has to qualify as the meeting from Purgatory, the bishops and the feminists met for *eight and a half years*. As a committee of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB), they conferred with each other and traveled around the country to "dialogue" with 75,000 feminists. The result, released last June, is "Called To Be One in Christ Jesus: A Pastoral Response to the Concerns of Women for Church and Society."

Two previous drafts of this document were rejected by the majority of American bishops. The third, which was first considered last June and was scheduled to be voted on in revised form last month, deserves to meet the same fate, because it's still the gospel according to NOW. "We denounce sexism as a moral and social evil," says the document, which also condemns "*machismo*," "insensitivity," and male "lack of interest." But what exactly is "sexism"? Not acting immorally, unjustly, or uncharitably toward women; that has always been a sin. It is rather the political iniquity of seeing men and women as different. Surely we are not called to be identical in Christ, but to these bishops and their feminist comrades, ACLU offenses are the real ones.

Women, the authors tell us with horror, "earn approximately 65 cents for every dollar paid to men." This must be corrected through government-mandated "equality." As even a liberal bishop should be able to see, the Creator made each of us different. There is no equality in the talents we receive from God or the use we make of them. In fact, it is our radical inequality that makes the economy possible. If we were identical, there would be no division of labor.

Egalitarianism, as usual, quickly gets silly. Are we really supposed to think it an injustice that poorly educated women tend to work in what the document decries as "low-paying industries"? But aren't we all equal in God's eyes? What blasphemous nonsense. St. John is not equal to Judas, and Mother Teresa is not equal to Mao, to God, or to us. And from an economic standpoint, the bum is not equal to the businessman. The attempt to make him so only destroys society, as we see under socialism.

Yes—as the documents tell us again and again—women as a class earn less than men as a class. But women work fewer hours than men and average fewer continuous years on a job than men. Mothers take time off to raise their children. If they go back to work, they have less experience than men who stayed on the job. Mothers also work much less overtime than fathers and take off far more days (to care for sick children, among other duties). This is all praiseworthy, but it has economic consequences.

The income difference between men and women is market based. If it weren't, as economist Thomas Sowell points out, entrepreneurs would form all-women firms to outcompete overpaid male firms. On the other hand, as the document never mentions, women who never marry earn more than 90 percent of what men earn in the same occupations.

The "Pastoral Response," however, wants all women to be treated for economic purposes as if they were childless and husbandless. It advocates more government intervention in the economy to bring this about, even hinting that men should be forced to take an equal role in housekeeping. (I can see it now: the Federal Vacuuming Police.)

At the risk of shocking moderns: only women are equipped physically, psychologically, and spiritually to bear and raise children. (That seems a truism and it is, but no form of truth is popular today.) Because of this, women do not have the same drive for power as men, or therefore the same role in the division of labor. As sociologist Steven Goldberg has shown, men have dominated the high-paying, high-prestige positions in every society in history. To the extent that women come to dominate a formerly male profession—medicine in Russia, for example—it loses status.

But isn't there a moral obligation, economics or no economics, to pay working women a "living wage"? No, for as Father Luis de Molina and other Scholastics showed so many centuries ago, the just wage is the market wage, *whether or not* it provides the standard of living the employee wants. "If you do not want to serve for that salary, leave!" he wrote. Added the Franciscan priest Villalobos, "it is against reason and justice" to try to make someone hire you at a wage he does not want to pay. Higher incomes can come only from increased capital accumulation. If the authors of this document want to raise the general standard of living, they should support the free market and oppose capital-eroding government intervention. Needless to say, they take exactly the wrong position.

It is admirable, we are also told, for married women to work "to enhance their personal growth," but not if they are "compelled to work solely because of economic necessity." I have news for the bishops: ever since Adam and Eve were tossed out of the Garden of Eden, the vast majority of us have had to work because of economic necessity. It is certainly true that society is better off, not to speak of children, if married women do not work outside the home. But heavier and heavier taxes on families since World War II have forced American wives into the workplace. Subversion of paternal authority and family independence have contributed to this trend as well. So naturally, the report wants egalitarian marriage and an economically omnipotent state. After all, in the bad old days, "women were seen as subordinate to the headship of their husbands." Now we realize that "a couple is called to be subordinate to one another." Huh?

Scripture and 19 centuries of Christian tradition tell us that the husband is head of the family as Christ is head of the church. This doesn't mean dictatorship. Husbands are senior partners in the family as wives are senior partners in the household. As elsewhere, equality in this realm is a recipe for disaster. The authors also tut-tut the modern divorce rate, without mentioning that it stems in part from the breakdown of male authority in the family and the concomitant increase in female adultery, feminist-approved and usually work-related. To combat divorce, by the way, the report proposes a vigorous national program of . . . seminars.

Hispanic women, we are told, are double victims, for they "are not encouraged to learn English." That's correct, thanks in part to the bureaucrats of the NCCB, who ardently support

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multilingualism (except for Latin). Hispanics *should* be encouraged to learn English. Some first steps, not mentioned in this document, would be to pull down every Spanish street sign in Miami, to abolish public-school instruction in Spanish, and to burn all foreign-language ballots. And speaking of language, the report wants the Bible and the liturgy to be rewritten with "inclusive" language so they can get the feminist's nonhousekeeping seal of approval. Be ready for "Our Parent, Who Art in Heaven."

To make sure that no green shoots penetrate the concrete, the report calls for enforcement committees in every diocese to stamp out "sexism" and screening panels to prevent nonfeminists from being ordained. Any young man who agrees with St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, and every other orthodox Christian teacher on this issue must be barred from the priesthood.

The report, however, isn't all bad: it criticizes abortion, in passing, and opposes female priests, with clenched teeth. But why should normal Catholics pay any attention to a document that urges them to give lesbians "special consideration" because they have been "belittled and demeaned"? Belittled and demeaned? They should try being a white, middle-aged, middle-class Catholic heterosexual male.

—*Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr.*

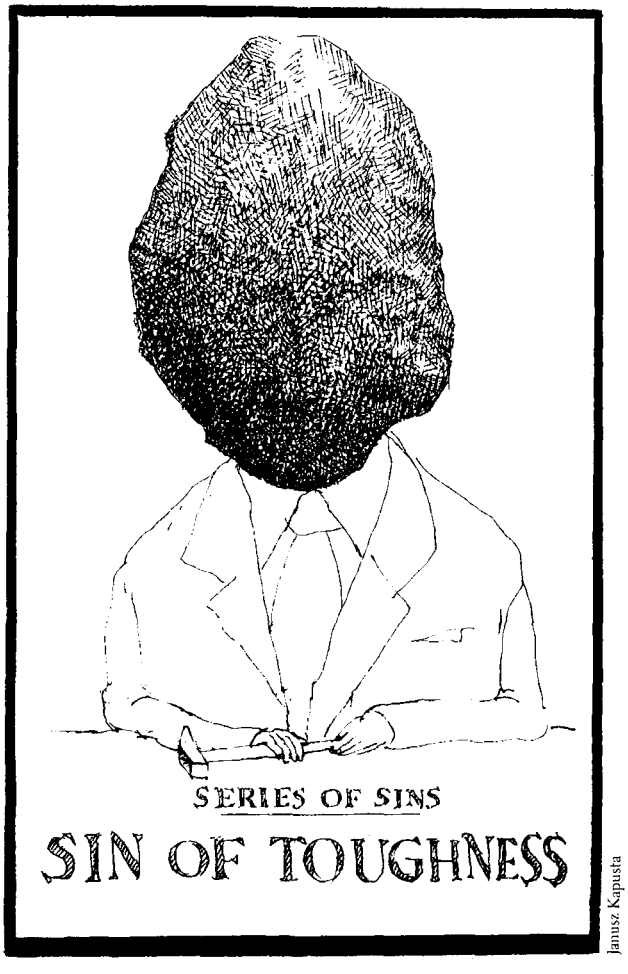
THE SUPREME COURT'S recent *Casey* decision on abortion is a memorable example of sociological balderdash. The joint decision began, "Liberty finds no refuge in a jurisprudence of doubt," to which Justice Scalia fired back in his dissent, "Liberty finds no refuge in this jurisprudence of confusion." Scalia's observation becomes painfully clear when one reads the Court's decision.

Declaring they would not overrule the "central holding" of *Roe* v. *Wade*, Justices O'Connor, Kennedy, and Souter argued that their decision was justified because some people have grown accustomed to abortion. "[F]or two decades of economic and social developments, people have organized their intimate relationships and made choices that define their views of themselves and their places in society, in reliance on the availability of abortion in the event that contraception should fail." They then weighed the cost of *Roe*'s "repudiation as it would fall on those who have relied reasonably on the rule's continued application": "Abortion is customarily chosen as an unplanned response to the consequence of unplanned activity or to the failure of conventional birth control, and except on the assumption that no intercourse would have occurred but for *Roe*'s holding, such behavior may appear to justify no reliance claim. . . . To eliminate the issue of reliance that easily, however, one would need to limit cognizable reliance to specific instances of sexual activity."

Next the jurists argued that "the ability of women to participate equally in the economic and social life of the Nation has been facilitated by their ability to control their reproductive lives." Thus, "the reservations any of us may have in reaffirming the central holding of *Roe* are outweighed," meaning they could not overturn the precedent.

To be sure, the Justices did employ legalese. They declared that the force of the principle of *stare decisis* compelled them to uphold *Roe*. Yet they did not maintain all of the *Roe* precedent, choosing instead to repudiate its trimester framework, while reaffirming its "central holding."

Surprisingly, the opinion describing the central holding, rather than focusing on the famous 1973 right to privacy discerned in the "penumbra" of the Constitution, read more like one of NARAL's television commercials. It declared "a woman's right to choose an abortion" without "undue interference from the State." Abortion, said the joint Justices, is a "fundamental right" protected by the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, a special "liberty" not to be deprived. The "urgent claims of a woman to retain the ultimate control over her destiny and her body" are claims "implicit" in the meaning of liberty. However, rather than coming under "strict scrutiny" as with other "fundamental rights" (Justice Blackmun's view), abortion laws are to be evaluated by a new standard established by the joint opinion, the "undue burden" test. In this manner, the joint opinion upheld most of Pennsylvania's



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statutory provisions.

The Court also said that it couldn't overturn *Roe* because it would be seen as acceding to public pressure, thereby jeopardizing its institutional legitimacy. "But whatever the premises of opposition may be, only the most convincing justification . . . could suffice to demonstrate that a later decision overruling the first was anything but a surrender to political pressure." "So to overrule under fire . . . would subvert the Court's legitimacy beyond any serious question."

Also noteworthy is Justice Blackmun's swan song. "I am 83 years old," he wrote, "I cannot remain on this Court forever, and when I do step down, the confirmation process for my successor may well focus on the issue before us today. That, I regret, may be exactly where the choice between two worlds will be made."

The verbal sparring between the joint Justices and the dissenters is remarkable. The Chief Justice decried the unsupported "generalized assertions about the national psyche." He labeled as "undeveloped and totally conclusory" the joint Justices' "unconventional and unconvincing notion of reliance, a view based on the surmise that the availability of abortion since *Roe* has led to 'two decades of economic and social developments' that would be undercut if the error of *Roe* were recognized." In fact, he added, "one cannot be sure to what economic and social developments the opinion is referring": "Surely it is dubious to suggest that 'women have reached their places in society' in reliance upon *Roe*, rather than as a result of their determination to obtain higher education and compete with men in the job market, and of society's increasing recognition of their ability to fill positions that were previously thought to be reserved only for men."

Furthermore, the Chief Justice seemed astounded that his colleagues had argued to uphold *Roe* because people had grown accustomed to abortion. Citing other major decisions that the Court had reversed and the long periods of time before reversals, he wrote: "However, the simple fact that a generation or more had grown used to these major decisions did not prevent the Court from correcting its errors in these cases, nor should it prevent us from correctly interpreting the Constitution here."

Saying "the Imperial Judiciary lives," Justice Scalia castigated the joint Justices for their "contrived" doctrine of *stare decisis*, for claiming to uphold a precedent but revising it: "It seems to me that *stare decisis* ought to be applied even to the doctrine of *stare decisis*, and I confess never to have heard of this new keep-what-you-want-and-throw-away-the-rest version." Rehnquist pointed out that the "unworkable" new undue burden standard "had no roots in constitutional law."

Asserting that true "fundamental rights" could be applied by the Court only to those areas where there is long-standing American legal tradition, four Justices declared that *Roe* erred in construing abortion as a fundamental right. As Scalia argued, the "issue is whether [abortion] is a liberty protected by the Constitution of the United States. I am sure it is not." He cited "two simple facts: (1) the Constitution says absolutely nothing about it, and (2) the long-standing traditions of American society have permitted it to be legally proscribed."

To the notion that overturning *Roe* would be surrendering to political pressure, the Chief Justice retorted: "This is a truly novel principle. . . . Under this principle, when the Court has ruled on a divisive issue, it is apparently prevented from overruling that decision for the sole reason that it was incorrect, *unless opposition to the original decision had died away*." Scalia noted that "the notion that we would decide a case differently from the way that we otherwise would have in order to show that we can stand firm against public approval is frightening." For political pressure goes both ways: "What makes all this relevant to the bothersome application of 'political pressure' against the Court are twin facts that the American people love democracy and the American people are not fools. As long as this Court thought (and the people thought) that we Justices were doing essentially lawyers' work up here—reading text and discerning our society's traditional understanding of that text—the public pretty much left us alone. Texts and traditions are facts to study, not convictions to demonstrate about."

Scalia then added: "But if in reality our process of constitutional adjudication consists primarily of making *value judgments* . . . then a free and intelligent people's attitude can be expected to be . . . quite different. The people know that their value judgments are quite as good as those taught in any law school—maybe better . . . then the people *should* demonstrate, to protest that we do not implement *their* values instead of *ours*. Not only that, but confirmation hearings for new Justices *should* deteriorate into question-and-answer sessions in which Senators go through their constituents' most favored and most disfavored alleged constitutional rights . . . Value judgments, after all, should be voted on, not dictated . . . Justice Blackmun not only regards this prospect with equanimity, he solicits it."

The average citizen sensed the truth all along—and couldn't have said it any better.

—*Anne Marie Morgan*

THE SOUTHERN CLASSICS Series is a new venture of J. S. Sanders and Company. John Stoll Sanders and his series editor M. E. Bradford are systematically resurrecting worthy titles that have disappeared from the pages of *Books In Print*. In so doing, they are making a valuable statement about the Southern tradition in American literature.

I purposely use the word "tradition" rather than "canon"—that cant phrase of the cultural left. To speak of a literary canon is to suggest an analogy with the fixed body of sacred texts that embody Christian revelation. In contrast, the literary tradition is, as T. S. Eliot envisioned it, an expanding patrimony that connects us in various ways with those who have gone before. We honor that inheritance not by "preserving" it, but, like the prudent servant in the parable of the talents, by enhancing it. Just as the tradition nurtures us, we enrich it and, in so doing, alter the past by altering our relationship to it.

Not surprisingly, the Southern tradition defined by Sanders and Bradford seems to have reached its full flower with the Fugitive and Agrarian movements. Of the 20th-century "classics" they have published or promised, all but two are products of the Vanderbilt Renascence. (I am including works by Caroline Gordon, who, as Mrs. Allen Tate, was part of the Fugitive-Agrarian circle, if not an official member of either group.) Not only are these books themselves artifacts of the past, but several deal with an even earlier time.

Allen Tate's biography of Stonewall

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Jackson and Andrew Lytle's of Bedford Forrest were the work of young men (the first published books of each author) trying to come to terms with their Southern heritage. Although Donald Davidson had entered middle age before writing his two-volume history of the Tennessee River, he had wrestled for years with what it meant to be an artist and a Southerner. Even a book of old age, such as Andrew Lytle's *A Wake for the Living*, is concerned with recreating a usable past.

Among the classic works of fiction reprinted by Sanders are Robert Penn Warren's first novel *Night Rider* (set in the Kentucky of his youth), Stark Young's Civil War romance *So Red the Rose*, and three volumes by Caroline Gordon—*None Shall Look Back*, *Penhally*, and *Green Centuries*. From outside the Fugitive-Agrarian orbit, we have the Kentucky regionalism of Elizabeth Madox Roberts's *The Great Meadow*, as well as Owen Wister's rendering of life in post-Civil War Charleston, *Lady Baltimore*. The 19th-century South is represented by the prose elegies of Thomas Nelson Page's *In Ole Virginia* (1887) and by the tall tales of Augustus Baldwin Longstreet's *Georgia Scenes* (1835).

The best news for teachers of Southern literature is the publication of a revised edition of William Pratt's historic anthology *The Fugitive Poets*. When the original edition of this book went out of print some years ago, we were left with no single volume of Fugitive verse. Had Sanders and Company done nothing more than revive that edition, with Pratt's brilliant critical introduction, it would have been cause for rejoicing. Instead, Pratt used this opportunity to produce an even better book. The new edition includes expanded selections from the poets featured in the original volume, along with work by the previously unrepresented—Sidney Mttron Hirsch, Andrew Lytle, Hart Crane, John Gould Fletcher, Robert Graves, and Laura Riding. A comparison of Pratt's original edition, published in 1965, with the current volume illustrates the adaptations made within a living tradition.

No doubt, Matthew Arnold was correct in arguing that there are both creative and critical eras in the life of a literary culture. It is generally agreed that the creative ferment known as the Southern Renascence ended shortly after World War II. (Whether we are now in the midst of a second flowering is a subject for another essay.) With the end of the Renascence, however, came an increased critical and scholarly awareness of Southern writing as a literature worthy of study.

If the writers featured in this series are among the creative geniuses of the Southern muse, the critics and scholars who have written prefaces for the volumes are bearers of the tradition, what John Crowe Ransom in "Antique Harvesters" called "keepers of a rite." In addition to Bradford and Pratt, this list includes Madison Smartt Bell, George Core, Thomas Fleming, George Garrett, Eileen Gregory, James E. Kibler, Jr., Russell Kirk, Thomas H. Landess, Walter Sullivan, Clyde N. Wilson, and Thomas Daniel Young. The Sanders edition of *A Wake for the Living* joins an author, Andrew Lytle, and a prefacer, Madison Bell, born 54 years apart. Both happen to be novelists and critics of the first order. Together they represent the continuing vitality of Southern literature.

Although all true art is in a sense immortal, the material conditions of its existence help to determine its place in the cultural tradition. Books that are out of print cannot be adopted as classroom texts or even enjoy much of a cult popularity outside academia. Existing editions are liable to gather dust on library shelves. (A few years ago, the student employee stamping some books I was checking out of the Clemson library noticed that one of my volumes had last been checked out before she was born.) John Sanders and Mel Bradford have taken some neglected treasures off the shelf and blown the dust away.

—*Mark Royden Winchell*

MURIEL SARAH SPARK, the novelist, and European classicist and historian Walter Burkert are the recipients of the 1992 Ingersoll Prizes. Spark received the T. S. Eliot Award for Creative Writing; and Burkert, the Richard M. Weaver Award for Scholarly Letters. The awards, each of which carries a cash prize of $20,000, acknowledge writers of abiding importance whose works affirm the fundamental principles of Western civilization.

Muriel Spark was born in 1918 in Edinburgh, Scotland, and graduated from the Heriot Watt College. She married in 1937; moved to Rhodesia; gave birth to a son; divorced her husband during World War II; and returned to Great Britain by 1944, where she worked for the war effort. During this time, she wrote critically acclaimed poetry, becoming editor of *Poetry Review* and general secretary of the Poetry Society in 1947. After editing several volumes of poetry in the early 1950's, she wrote, at the encouragement of her publisher, MacMillan, a novel entitled *The Comforters* (1957). Her 25 works of fiction also include: *Memento Mori* (1958), *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (1961), *The Mandelbaum Gate* (1965), *Bang-Bang You're Dead and Other Stories* (1983), and *Symposium* (1990). Her most recent book, *Curriculum Vitae* (1992), is an autobiography of her early life and will soon be published in the United States. She received an Order of the British Empire in 1967 and now resides mostly in Italy.

Walter Burkert was born in Germany in 1931. He studied classical philology, history, and philosophy at the universities of Erlangen and Munich from 1950 to 1954. Since 1969 he has been a professor of classical philology at the University of Zurich in Switzerland. His most important book is perhaps *Homo Necans: The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth* (1983), which describes sacrifice as the key to understanding both ancient and modern human society. His other translated works include: *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism* (1972), *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual* (1979), and *Ancient Mystery Cults* (1987). He was Sather Professor of Classical Literature at the University of California at Berkeley in 1977 and has received a variety of awards and honors, including the Balzan Prize in 1990.

The Ingersoll Foundation is the philanthropic division of Ingersoll Milling Machine Company of Rockford, Illinois. The Rockford Institute administers the prizes. Past recipients of the T. S. Eliot Award are Mario Vargas Llosa (1991), Charles Causley (1990), George Garrett (1989), Walker Percy (1988), Octavio Paz (1987), V. S. Naipaul (1986), Eugène Ionesco (1985), Anthony Powell (1984), and Jorge Luis Borges (1983). John Lukacs (1991), Forrest McDonald (1990), Edward O. Wilson (1989), Edward Shils (1988), Josef Pieper (1987), Andrew Lytle (1986), Robert Nisbet (1985), Russell Kirk (1984), and James Burnham (1983) are previous recipients of the Richard M. Weaver Award.

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by Samuel Francis

The Life of Riley

One good way to ruin your Christmas this year would be to spend the holidays reading a new book entitled *Abandoned: The Betrayal of the American Middle Class Since World War II*, by two law professors at the University of South Carolina, William J. Quirk and R. Randall Bridwell. Maybe you don't want to ruin your Christmas, and that's understandable, but if you do read the book, you will at least be prepared to understand what is likely to happen to you and to what remains of your country in the coming years.

The reason *Abandoned* will put ashes in your stocking is that it is one of the first (maybe *the* first) full-length examinations of how virtually every dominant institution in the United States exploits, defrauds, lies to, oppresses, and endangers the middle class that constitutes the economic and social core of American life. The authors take the reader through the recent history of such financial boondoggles as the New York City fiscal crisis, the national and Third World debts, the Social Security and Savings and Loan scams, and similar episodes to show how middle-income Americans wind up paying for the irresponsibilities and outright criminality of politicians and business leaders. They move on to the subject of the impenetrability of the political Establishment and reveal how both political parties are systematically structured to ignore the interests and wishes of their middle-class constituents and to respond only to well-organized and well-financed lobbies. They examine in depth the emergence in the 1960's of a legal and judicial system that appears to seek out devices by which the values, interests, freedom, and personal security of middle-class Americans can be wrecked. They conclude with a section on the universities of the 1980's, in which "multiculturalists" and "political correctness" cultists contrive to assault and uproot the last vestiges of traditional middle-class culture, ethics, and manners, even as underclass students enjoy enforced privileges in admissions, promotion, grading, and financing, while white middle-class students and their families are obliged to pay exorbitantly higher tuitions and endure racial discrimination.

It is true that much of the authors' information is not especially new; there are also large parts of the book that are not at all well-written, and most of it seems to have been proofread by a chimpanzee. Nevertheless, I know of no other recent work that puts the major immediate economic, political, and cultural threats to Middle America in such an informative and comprehensive perspective, and it is precisely that perspective that makes the book and its thesis so frightening. What the authors are chronicling is not merely an irritating "unfairness" and "lower standard of living" but the systematic destruction of a civilization by the elite that rules it.

The theme of "middle-class alienation" is not new either, of course, and indeed it has been a staple of American politics since the campaigns of George Wallace and Richard Nixon in the late 1960's. Nixon essentially swiped it from Wallace and used it to construct the prototype of the "Reagan coalition" of traditional Republicans, white Southerners and Westerners, and Northeastern urban ethnics. This year, after a full generation of conceding the white middle-class vote to the Republicans, the Democrats finally tumbled to the idea that they too could pose as the champions of Middle America, and the whole strategy of Bill Clinton seems to have been based on assuming that posture. This apparent convergence of the two parties toward an essentially conservative Middle American constituency leads various professional conservatives to chirp that the conservative values and interests of Middle America are now triumphant. To their great credit, the authors of *Abandoned* don't fall for that one.

One point they dwell on in their chapter on "Political Abandonment" is that the Republicans long ago figured out how to emit Middle American noises while pursuing policies that trample on Middle American interests. The Republicans as far back as the Nixon administration developed what the authors call the "last vote" theory:

> The conservatives had no place to go, they had to vote for you. So give them some rhetoric to keep them happy. Push your real policies for the last vote. Where is the last vote? It is right next to the Democratic position on any issue. So you adopt *actual* policies which get as close to the Democrats as you possibly can.

This seems to have been the strategy reflected in a remark made by Attorney General-designate John Mitchell in 1968 to an audience of civil rights activists, "Watch what we do, not what we say," a line that appropriately serves as the epigraph of one of the book's chapters. Indeed, it seems to have served as the motto of the Republicans themselves ever since. As the authors note,

> Since the Republicans have followed the "last vote" theory, the conservatives get rhetoric on emotional issues: pledge of allegiance . . . flag burning . . . abortion . . . forced busing . . . law and order . . . Willie Horton. . . . The actual policies, on the other hand, seek out the "last vote." Take, for example, the Civil Rights Act of 1991 that President Bush, for 20 months, called a "quota" bill.

Yet the Civil Rights Act that Mr. Bush eventually signed in late 1991 was only marginally different from the one he had been denouncing, and in the campaign just concluded the President and Mr. Quayle did pretty much the same thing with "family values." No sooner had they gorged themselves on this cliché at their convention in Houston than Mr. Quayle began to back away from any of the commitments it implied and to boast of how the administration had followed a policy of "nondiscrimination" toward homosexuals. The implication of the "conservatives have no other place to go" strategy, of course, is that even committed and serious conservatives (all ten of them) wind up every four years whining that they have to support the

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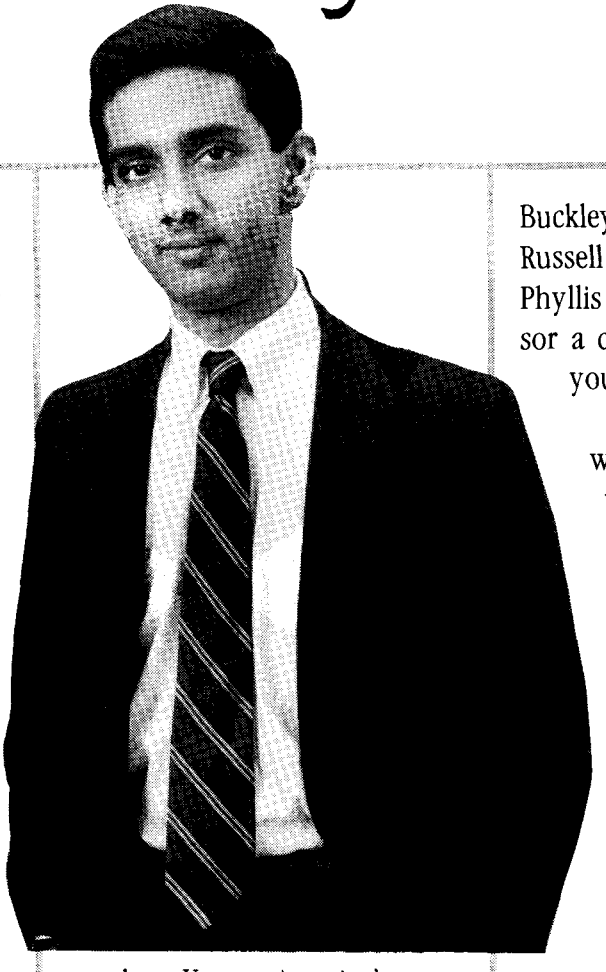
"You're the first conservative I've seen in four years."



One evening last spring, bestselling author and lecturer Dinesh D'Souza delivered a speech at Kent State University. At the end of his talk several students thanked him for coming to their campus. One of the students, a senior, said sadly, "You know, I've been at Kent State for four years and you're the first conservative speaker I've ever seen."

Things aren't much different at other American campuses. Speakers programs, like the curriculum, are heavily weighted to the left. And for this reason many students are graduating from college with an incomplete education.

Don't let your school do this to you. Don't go through four years of college without hearing a conservative speaker. Young America's Foundation brought Dinesh D'Souza to Kent State. Last year we sponsored hundreds of conservative speakers on campuses all over the United States; speakers such as Norman Schwarzkopf, William F. Buckley, Robert Novak, Russell Kirk, Edwin Meese and Phyllis Schlafly. We can sponsor a conservative lecturer at your campus, too.

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"lesser of two evils." For some reason it does not occur to them to develop candidates and political mechanisms between elections so that they will not be in the same fix the next time. Why shouldn't Republican leaders take them for granted?

But neither, also to their great credit, do the authors of *Abandoned* fall for the current Republican line that the Reagan era was a kind of Garden of Eden for the middle class and that Mr. Bush was the serpent who led us out of paradise. "Nineteen eighty-eight earnings," they write, "were below 1968 earnings; they were 17 percent below the 1972 high point. Home ownership, which had risen steadily since the Depression, leveled off in the 1970s and, in the 1980s, declined slightly. The country took on a new look; along the highways there were endless strip malls, discount stores selling goods from Asia and fast-food restaurants. This is the reality of the 'service economy.' Jobs, in the new 'K-Mart economy,' were low-skill and low-wage." By the 1990's,

> Median family income was also going nowhere despite the great increase of two-salary families. Family income took until 1987 to get back to where it was in1973.... Citizens have been forced to borrow heavily to maintain their standard of living as real wages dropped. . . . Since the interest rates on all these debts are high, consumer borrowing is now a very heavy interest burden for the American family to pull along. To cover college and other expenses, Americans have been forced to convert their main asset—the equity on their homes—into cash by borrowing against it. In 1990, because of borrowing, U. S. home equity fell by $300 billion, 16 percent of the total.

Moreover, Reagan's supposed major accomplishment for the economy, the 1986 Tax Reform Act, "took dead aim on the middle class. The promised across-the-board tax reduction was in fact a tax increase for them," and "basic middle-class deductions—including interest on car loans, credit cards and education loans—were abolished or weakened. A wealthy person could deduct all the interest on two $500,000 homes, but a middle-class person could not deduct the interest on a loan to put his children through college. Also abolished was [sic] the 'two-earner marital deduction,' most IRAs, the state and local sales tax deduction and the lower rate for capital gains."

Who did benefit from the 1986 act? Under "transitional rules" ostensibly designed to ease the difficulties of changing over to the new system, the tax reform created "174 special exceptions for corporations including Unocal, Phillips Petroleum, Texaco, Pennzoil, General Motors, Chrysler, Goldman Sachs, Manville, General Mills, Walt Disney, Pan Am, Northwest Airlines, Delta, Control Data, Multimedia and Metromedia. A few foreign Princes rolled up to the trough and got their own transitional rules, including Mitsubishi and Toyota." For conservatives who believe their mission in life is to defend and protect corporate socialism, the Reagan Era was indeed a Golden Age. For the Real America, it was a tombstone.

Yet, for all of the justified outrage Professors Quirk and Bridwell muster and for all the statistical ammunition with which they arm themselves, there is a serious conceptual gap in *Abandoned*. For the authors, the norm by which they measure the decline of the middle class today is the post-World War II age of Eisenhower, the era when the United States was the dominant world power and maintained at home a peaceful, prosperous, and highly consensual social order. The Fall, for them, came in the 1960's, when Lyndon Johnson captured the federal government, expanded its scope and expense far beyond what he had inherited, and recruited "intellectuals" to design, run, and benefit from the Great Society. Prior to that time, the American middle class, the authors believe, was dominant, and its interests, values, economy, and aspirations were the principal concerns of the government, which the middle class or its representatives controlled.

Now the authors are perfectly correct that, compared to the 1990's, the 1950's were indeed a prelapsarian state, and if they had left it at that there would be no more to say. But what they have missed in their sometimes tendentious contrast between the 1950's and the present decade is that the abyss that today yawns before the middle-class nucleus of American society began to open long before the 1960's. In their account of the "Legal Abandonment," a process the authors see as beginning around the time of Louis Brandeis and the emergence of "sociological jurisprudence" in the early 20th century, they are much more on target, but perhaps they see this historical aspect of "abandonment" more clearly because it is a slice of history more familiar to them as legal scholars.

Yet it was in exactly the same period of the early 20th century that various changes began to accumulate in American bourgeois society that sowed the seeds of the current dispossession of Middle America. The real "abandonment," that is, took place in the ideological greenhouse of the Progressive Era and in the structural changes in business, government, and culture that led to the dominance of managerial elites in all three sectors. Professors Quirk and Bridwell place a good deal of emphasis on the "lack of accountability" of tenured professors, judges, and entrenched congressional incumbents as one of the main sources of the abandonment, but it is exactly that absence of accountability that bureaucratization and technical specialization breeds and in fact bred long before the fruit became apparent in the 1960's and later. The Great Society was merely an intensification and a vast expansion of the same kind of social management, therapy, and engineering that originated in the Progressive Era, and the corporations, universities, federal bureaucracies, and mass media that began to develop in that era were the grandparents of Lyndon Johnson's deformed children.

The reason it is important to understand that the roots of the abandonment of the 1965-92 era lie in the early 20th-century revolution in government, business, and cultural organizations is that the middle class itself underwent a revolution at the same time, and what happened to the middle class then helps explain why today it so passively accepts whatever the misruling elite imposes on it. In the 19th century, the American middle class was the dominant and formative minority of American civilization because it was an economically and socially independent force, based on privately owned and operated property holdings in the form of farms and family enterprises. The independence it enjoyed enabled it to think and do what it wanted and to resist effectively proposals that threatened it. The organizational revolution that spawned mas-

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sive corporations, government, and cultural institutions in education and the mass media swallowed this independent middle class and converted it into the dependent, passive, well-fed, and well-entertained middle-income proletariat of the 1950's. The major cultural theme of that decade was the new dependence of Middle American life on the structures and mechanisms of the mass organizations and on the elites that governed and manipulated these organizations. Television, Hollywood, and advertising were the most obvious instruments of mass cultural manipulation in the 1950's, but they were cut from the same cloth as "The Organization Man" in the mass economy and what Murray Rothbard calls the "Welfare-Warfare State" constructed by Cold War liberalism.

The economic, political, and cultural collapse that gapes before us in the 1990's is indeed the work of the elites of the managerial system, and Professors Quirk and Bridwell are right to document the failings of those elites and to call for their expulsion. But the problem is that the middle-class proletariat of the 1950's and afterwards that they celebrate is simply not capable of taking the action necessary to expel them from power. Having become dependent on the mass structure of the system in the 1950's and having lost its economic, political, psychic, and cultural autonomy, the Middle American proletariat no longer retains the ability to participate in and lead public life except as a mass of spectators. Its level of political participation has been reduced to watching whatever portions of the national conventions of the two major parties are shown on television every four years and to voting for one of the two candidates that emerges from the shadow play.

To be sure, there are systemic discontents, dislocations, and actual threats to the Middle American proletariat in the present system, and an analysis of those frustrations is what the authors of *Abandoned* offer. But let us not deceive ourselves that this passive proletariat by itself will take any action to retrieve control of the regime that oppresses it. If there is to be any serious change in the leadership and structure of the regime, the Middle American proletariat can provide the army, but there is no reason to think it can still produce the Pattons and MacArthurs who will be necessary to win its war for survival. ◁

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Anna Mycek-Wodecki

The Ten Commandments

I. OTHER GODS AND IMAGES

by Thomas Molnar

The Ten Commandments, and many other biblical texts, used to be for me pious, nondescript, and rather gratuitous statements. That was youth. With maturity and age, they began to reveal (the right word) an immeasurable depth of wisdom, whose exploration occupied the life of a Pascal and a Chesterton. Our contemporary "culture" (various paganisms, abortion/euthanasia, inclusive language, overall politicization) has demoted these texts to the level of bored clichés or outright mystifications. Hence the need to focus on them again.

Among the commandments, perhaps the first has fared the worst. The ones about stealing, adultery, or respect for parents have retained a kind of corrupted referential value; they are at least "issues," subject to discussion on TV panels and in newspaper editorials. Indeed, according to the counter-commandments, stealing (looting) is economically justified; adultery is still a valid notion in reverse, since about 50 percent of all couples do not divorce; and filial sentiments are at least indirectly a topic of debate when children's rights, incest, and adoption by homosexuals come up for legislation.

But things like "do not defy me by making other gods your own," "do not carve false images," and "love me and keep my commandments" to moderns sound incomprehensible and look like fossils from a sunken phallic period, elucubrations of an opinionated God. What is more, we have been told by Ludwig Feuerbach, Pastor Eugen Drewermann, and some Notre Dame theologians that "God" himself is but a projection of man, derived from the image-making and myth-telling areas of the brain. The Heideggerian philosopher Jean-Luc Marion recently devoted a book to *God Without Being* and asked the printer to put a canceling "X" over the word God in the text, since the biblical God is an idol before whom David used to sing and dance.

The point I wish to make is that the Ten Commandments contain in a nutshell all that we must know of man, society, and the world. The remaining question—why is the First Commandment *first*?—is historically evident. The Hebrews had exited an idolatrous land but carried with them the cultural habits of that land, much like German-Jewish refugees in the 30's and 40's who were marked by Goethe, Schiller,

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Thomas Mann, and the Weimar Republic. The Hebrews then came upon a similarly idolatrous land, Palestine, where idol-worshiping city-dwellers looked down upon these nomads with their strange set of Mosaic rules. The former must have called the latter "pagans," just as the city-dwellers of the Roman Empire 1500 years later judged the peasants of the countryside. So the Hebrews were now impressed by Canaanite idols, to the dismay of their judges and prophets.

Yet, this explanation is only half of the reason for the first commandment's primacy. It is *first* because it also contradicts the principal human tendency of locating the divine in ourselves and of bringing our exalted ego into the focus of adoration. From the point of view of worship, the self has a drawback: it cannot be easily externalized or embodied in an object. But seen from the angle of its interests and passions, the self is an all-devouring monster, the test of God's power. Feuerbach and gang were right: God is either outside the self or the exalted self projected into an idol. Not necessarily a visible and tangible article, hand-carved, it can be a system, a world view, a method, a form of society. On the other hand, if you love and worship only me, God says through Moses to his people, you and your community will live in peace and harmony, not devoured by the passion of extremes. You will obey my commandments, which fit your nature and its aspirations and limits. The decisive metanoia is to make the first commandment your own: resist the temptation of worshiping yourself, of regarding yourself as the center of creation. I have nothing against carved images as such, says God to the Christians, provided they remain mere props for your senses and do not become masks for your ego-satisfaction.

The modern objection to the first commandment is its emphasis on exclusiveness, the gathering of everything sacred under one transcendent divine dome so that the sacred is drained from the cosmos, nature, and man. This was and is the major pagan argument. Yet it ignores the fact that if multiplied, the sacred permeates the profane world at myriad points and in myriad individual selves, gathering momentum and oversize ambition, and ending as mythology or ideology, a war of gods or of the inflated egos of ideologues.

The carved images that the first commandment targets are thus not the innocent museum pieces we rightly admire as art, nor the archaic idols of tribes that anyway see through them and adore the One God beyond His diverse manifestations. The more dangerous idols we currently worship are more subtle in their intolerance: science, history, a way of life, this or that regime, satisfaction with one's own goodness, a cause like progress, utopia, an "ism." All these are absolutized with the greatest of ease—not because we believe they are perfect, but because it is *we* who adore them. In other words, self-idolatry is so immensely tenacious that whatever it chooses to embrace becomes *ipso facto* an absolute.

The meaning of the first commandment thus becomes clear: it detaches us from self-laden absolutes, from idols of our own choosing. "Love me, follow my commandment"—that is, trust that the direction I give and the tasks I assign are not drawn from your own self-love, but are authenticated by the stamp of my creation, by the divine order of things. Your *self*, habitual altar of your daily worship, will lose its assumed perfection, and your eagerness for sin will be drained.

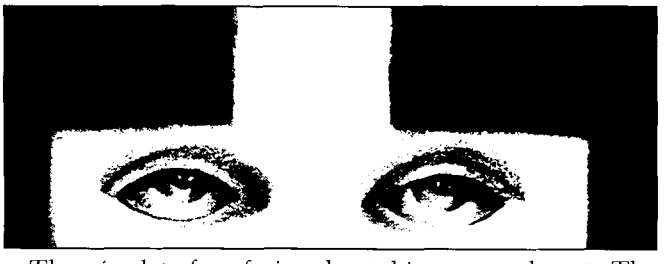
The Egyptian pantheon was filled with animals, often in combination with the human figure, a subtle reminder. The divine warning against carving likenesses of creatures of earth, underground, water, and air gathers significance against this background. His dictates thus have a deeper content: adore God, not His creations. The latter do not have to be crocodiles, cats, hawks, or bulls, but can be selected from daily life: the program of a political party, a conception of society, an idea, a philosophy. Does the first commandment, then, veto loyalty, attraction, curiosity, work for a common or partial good? It only points at their right object and at the human, creaturely condition, asking that we see them as through a glass, darkly. ⟨C⟩

Thomas Molnar's latest book is Philosophical Grounds, *published by Peter Lang.*

II. THE LORD'S NAME

by Gary North

Jesus sometimes used business analogies when He spoke His parables. Here I follow His lead. One way for a modern American to begin to understand this commandment is to treat God's name as trademarked property. In order to gain widespread distribution for His uncopyrighted repair manual—the Bible—and also to capture greater market share for His authorized franchise—the Church—God has graciously licensed the use of His name to anyone who will use it according to His written instructions. It needs to be understood, however, that God's name has not been released into the public domain. God retains legal control over His name and threatens serious penalties against the unauthorized misuse of this supremely valuable property. All trademark violations will be prosecuted to the limits of the law. The prosecutor, judge, jury, and enforcer is God.



There is a lot of confusion about this commandment. The misuse of God's name in obscene language is, I believe, the primary focus, but it is not the sole focus. There is another way to misuse God's name: unlawful cursing.

Many people think of cursing as a form of obscenity. Judicially, obscenity is not cursing. A curse invokes God's wrath on someone or something. In contrast, an obscenity is an attempt to empower language in order to rhetorically drive home a point: a kind of verbal hammer. Like an addictive drug, the initial effect wears off with time, and the constant use of obscenities eventually weakens one's language. One who continually resorts to obscenities loses the ability to communicate effectively.

It is my belief that the Ten Commandments are structured in terms of a model, what Ray R. Sutton has described as a five-point covenant. This covenant structure can be summarized in various ways, but I have adopted an acronym suggest-

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ed by one of my readers: THEOS (the Greek word for God):

Transcendence/immanence: the sovereignty of God
Hierarchy/representation: the structure of authority
Ethics/boundaries: the law of God
Oath/sanctions: the judgments of God (positive and negative)
Succession/inheritance: God's continuity of rule

Again, using terminology more familiar to the average American business, we can summarize this covenant structure in terms of five questions—the five fundamental questions to ask of any organization: Who's in charge here? To whom do I report? What are the rules? What do I get if I obey (disobey)? Does this outfit have a future?

Just before I sent to the printer my study of the economics of the Ten Commandments, *The Sinai Strategy* (1986), Sutton presented to me a preliminary version of his thesis. I saw immediately that the Ten Commandments (as enumerated by most Protestants and Orthodox Christians) are structured in terms of this five-point model: one through five and six through ten. Consider this commandment: the prohibition against misusing God's name. Next, consider the commandment against stealing. If my application of Sutton's thesis is correct, the two commandments should be related, since each is third on the list, and I do believe they are linked: the former commandment places a judicial boundary around God's name, while the latter places a judicial boundary around men's property.

In my book, I discussed the commandment against misusing God's name in terms of oaths, a topic that more properly belongs to point four of this biblical covenant model. The use of God's name in cursing someone is a misuse of His name, except when a church pronounces a lawful excommunication against a member or when a pastor or church officer pronounces a curse against a lawless persecutor of the local church or of the church in general. The common expletive "God damn" is in fact a formal invocation of God's eternal negative sanction: a specific calling down of God's wrath on someone. It is never a valid curse, for God's curses are in history uttered by His representatives only conditionally: "God will damn you *if* you do not repent before you die." No man has the authority to call God's eternal wrath down upon an enemy. (Calling down God's temporal wrath can be valid if done by ordained representatives.)

We must not profane God's holy name. Profanity is always a boundary violation: the transgression of a holy (set-apart) thing or space. We are not allowed to invoke God's name in order to validate our testimony, except in the unique situation of a court of law, whether civil or ecclesiastical. Taking a formal oath by invoking God's name is valid, just as swearing on a Bible is valid, but only in a God-authorized court of law: an institution authorized by God to pronounce representatively His temporal judgments and to enforce His temporal sanctions.

Yet the oath-based aspect of this commandment is not its primary focus. It is to maintain the integrity both of God's name and of man's language: prohibiting God's name as an expletive. Judicially speaking, using God's name as an expletive is a profane act, a violation of something holy. Any social order that tolerates this misuse of God's name will then move on to the toleration of other obscenities. The predictable result is the debasement of language, the substitution of obscenity for rhetoric.

Gary North is the president of the American Bureau of Economic Research in Tyler, Texas.

III. KEEPING THE SABBATH

by Frank W. Brownlow

"The flower is the end or proper object of the seed, not the seed of the flower. The reason for seeds is that flowers may be, not the reason of flowers that seeds may be." So Ruskin thought, and the idea seems obvious enough. Yet it can be a liberating revelation if one has fallen into the habit of assuming its opposite, that, for instance, a chicken is an egg's way of making another egg or that a student is the college's way of adding to the endowment.

Ruskin believed passionately that in the case of plants what he called spirit strove to realize itself in the flower. Similarly in the case of people, he thought that they worked to live; they did not live to work. It would follow, according to Ruskin, that times of rest and celebration are a principle in nature's cycles, which we represent figuratively with our Sabbaths, our Sundays, and our festivals. And that in fact is orthodox Christian thinking on the subject. As Bishop Lancelot Andrewes taught his students in Elizabethan Cambridge, "The Decalogue is the law of nature revived, and the law of nature is the image of God." Ruskin's route to the principle of rest and celebration would have struck Andrewes as curious and circuitous but not necessarily heterodox.

Sunday became the day of rest because it was the Lord's Day, the weekly feast of the Resurrection. On that day Christians celebrated mankind's salvation, the time when the Scriptures were fulfilled and things were made new. It was a day of new beginnings, a kind of human springtime and blossoming, in short, a cheerful, happy sort of day, marked, in Hooker's words, by "worship, bounty, and rest." By that standard Sunday was a real holiday, beginning with processions and solemnity and ending with dances and play. A popular verse of Psalm 118 sums up the day's character: "This is the day which the Lord hath made: we will rejoice and be glad in it."

Apparently at their best the old Sundays were really like that. Unfortunately, though, Sunday play sometimes became Sunday riot, and the Protestant reformers, intensely respectable people with a great reverence for religion and a keen distaste for the rowdy amusements of "the meaner sort of people," decided that Sunday needed tidying up. And no doubt it did. But the reform went too far and turned the day of gladness into a day of penitential misery for everyone. Sunday observance began with a welcome ban on work; yet in many parts of the English-speaking world it included until only a generation or so ago a ban on play as well.

Even the reformed Church of England began its Sunday morning service with such harrowingly penitential sentences as "I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me"—and the Church of England was a fairly benign institution. Wherever the real Puritans ("the hotter sort of Protestant," as one writer described them) dominated, hard-core

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Sabbatarianism followed. King James I and his son Charles tried to hold them off with a famous proclamation known as *The Book of Sports*, which forbade the Puritans to interfere with the people's traditional Sunday amusements. These included decorating the church before services, as well as playing, dancing, eating, drinking, and singing afterwards. But the infuriated Puritans would have their revenge: they cut off Charles's head, and in England under the Commonwealth, as in Scotland and Massachusetts, they forbade the keeping of holidays in general and banned in particular recreation on Sundays, even walking for pleasure. When the King came home on May 29, 1660, the people were so relieved they strewed his road from Dover to London with flowers and declared the occasion a new holy day.

Puritanism, like communism, was an aberration that was bound to disappear sooner or later. Even in Massachusetts and Scotland most of the "blue laws" are now repealed or in abeyance, although in Massachusetts one still cannot buy wine or beer on Sundays (unless he lives within ten miles of the New Hampshire border). Yet the effects of three hundred years of Sabbatarianism linger. The capacity for joy once lost is not easily regained; or as someone said, a roomful of Anglo-Saxons trying to amuse themselves can make a curious spectacle. We find it especially hard, except on rare national occasions, to enjoy ourselves communally as our pre-Puritan ancestors did. Worse, the pleasant habit of self-righteousness is a hard one to shake. One cannot help wondering how much of the sheer flapdoodle of the recent presidential campaign, especially the humorless moral grandstanding, is a legacy of the Puritan past.

Nonetheless, we still have our day of rest to do with as we wish. In these parts a fairly typical middle-class Sunday might begin with a devout reading of the Sunday *New York Times*, proceed to one of our local cathedrals of commerce—our malls—for an afternoon's shopping, and end with Masterpiece Theater and British sit-coms on public television for vespers. It would not satisfy Ruskin or the writer of Psalm 118, but it sure beats a day confined to three sermons and *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

Frank W. Brownlow is a professor of English at Mt. Holyoke College.

IV. HONORING THY PARENTS

by Allan Carlson

This divine order links children's respect for their parents and the bonding of the generations to the promise of life and success on the land. In these latter days, to be sure, the extended family stands among the most battered of traditional institutions, while the quasi-religious linkage of land and family has all but vanished. It is well to remember, though, how recently these changes occurred.

Far into the 19th Christian century, the ties between the generations in America remained firm. They defined the duties and expectations of individuals and spun a web of protection against the ambitions of potentates, in ways that the ancient Israelites would have understood. As the new historians remind us, the dominant American social pattern through the 1830's was hierarchical and patriarchal, in the Yankee North as well as in the Planter South. Americans gave first loyalty to kin, and they organized their lives around small household economies and subsistence agriculture, viewing them as the material foundations of liberty.

Until very recently, on the biblical scale of time, land and family formed the critical nexus. The preservation of the family freehold into the future was the American preoccupation. Farms and families were "two halves of a corporate whole," where the family served as a revolving fund, shifting land resources between the generations. Family members subordinated economic gain to the extended family's long-term security, achieved through settling and cultivating the soil.

The Great Disorder set in after 1840, when new forces began to tear families from the land and family member from family member. The standard, Whiggish course is to point to industrialization, or the rise of factories as replacements for primitive home economies and as liberating agents for individuals. But again, the new historians offer a more telling explanation. It was not industry, per se, that first disrupted American family patterns. For several decades, in fact, family and household frameworks contained the industrial impulse. Rather, it was the inculcation of "individualistic ideals" through the state's new "common schools" that shattered the old system. As demographer Norman Ryder has explained, "education of the junior generation is a subversive influence. Boys who go to school distinguish between what they learn there and what their fathers can teach them. . . . There is a struggle between the family and the state for the minds of the young," where state schools make "a direct appeal to the children over the heads of the parents."

For the next one hundred years, American social history could be written as the government's steady appropriation of ever more family functions. Mandatory school attendance laws and the "protection" of children from "inadequate" parents came in the late 19th century, while bans on "child labor" (or more aptly put, the socialization of children's time) followed in the early 20th. In the 1930's, the federal government socialized the insurance value of children through state old-age pensions, shattering the most important economic bond between the generations of a single family. More recently, Medicare took direct responsibility for the old, the sick, and the incontinent. All the while, farming families steadily retreated before the terrible union of big industry and centralized government, with the founding vision of an agrarian republic left buried in the rubble.

The contemporary American landscape is littered with the consequences: empty farmhouses and the *latifundia* of agribusiness and absentee owners; vast retirement cities in

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Florida and Arizona that rarely hear a child's shout; gleaming nursing homes where the aged sick are warehoused until they die; isolated young families struggling to rear children in a declining economy with a rising tax burden; overcrowded cities held hostage to youth gangs; and "social security centers" everywhere, drawing in the dependent masses for succor.

I can remember when the pastor of my youth explained the meaning of this commandment to my fellow confirmands and me. With his grey eyes flashing, the Reverend Lack told his snickering charges that this was the only commandment containing both a divine promise and an implicit threat. If we lived as families in harmony with God's natural order, he said, then all would be given to us. But if we failed to honor and follow our parents as God intended, then we would pay an awful price, in social ruin and the loss of all that God had granted. In 1961, his words struck my friends and me as the typical foolishness and exaggerations of an old man. In the more sober days of 1992, they carry the mark of inspiration.

Allan Carlson is the president of The Rockford Institute and publisher of Chronicles.

V. KILLING

by Jacob Neusner

"Thou shalt not kill" means you shalt not unjustly take away someone's remaining years on this earth. It does not mean you shalt not kill under any circumstances, and it does not mean you shalt not conduct war if it is just. The Torah knows the difference between manslaughter and murder, chance and intention, accident and malice, negligence and deliberation. The sages of the Torah, that is to say in secular language "the authorities of Judaism," find ample warrant for the death penalty in Scripture. I wonder, therefore, how people find support in the Torah for a pacifist stance that condemns all war, rejects as illegitimate the violence required for self-defense, and insists that since the victim is always right, the use of righteous violence is invariably unjustified.

The message of the Torah is a very different one: justice overrides sentimentality. The pacifist position, so far as it appeals to the Scriptures shared by Christianity and Judaism, misreads the Torah. The message of the Torah is that God favors the victim—when the victim is in the right and the persecutor is in the wrong. And that is a very different message from the one derived, I think through an excess of sympathy and an insufficiency of reflection, by those who condemn all war, all civil justice, all legitimate violence. A striking passage from a rabbinic document makes this point with great power:

> R. Yosé b. R. Yudan in the name of R. Yosé b. R. Nehorai says, "It is always the case that the Holy One, blessed be he, demands from the hand of the pursuer an accounting for the blood of those who have been pursued.
>
> "Abel was pursued by Cain, and God sought [an accounting for] the pursued: 'And the Lord looked [favorably] upon Abel and his meal offering.'
>
> "Noah was pursued by his generation, and God sought [an accounting for] the pursued: 'You and all your household shall come into the ark.'
>
> "Abraham was pursued by Nimrod, 'and God seeks what has been driven away': 'You are the Lord, the God who chose Abram and brought him out of Ur.'
>
> "Isaac was pursued by Ishmael, 'and God seeks what has been driven away': 'For through Isaac will seed be called for you.'
>
> "Jacob was pursued by Esau, 'and God seeks what has been driven away': 'For the Lord has chosen Jacob, Israel for his prized possession.'
>
> "Moses was pursued by Pharoah, 'and God seeks what has been driven away': 'Had not Moses His chosen stood in the breach before Him. . . .'
>
> "And the rule applies also to the matter of offerings. A bull is pursued by a lion, a sheep is pursued by a wolf, a goat is pursued by a leopard.
>
> "Therefore the Holy One, blessed be he, has said, 'Do not make offerings before me from those animals that pursue, but from those that are pursued: When a bull, a sheep, or a goat is born.

Eternities of the divine teach the same lesson as facts of history. God prefers the pursued to the pursuer, expressing that preference even in the animals that are to be offered on the Temple altar. But history—the catalogue of those whom God prefers—qualifies that judgment: God favors the pursued who is right over the pursuer who is wrong. So the message is clear: not pacifism but righteous conduct is what God has in mind.

Religiously based pacifism enjoys no monopoly on righteousness, and this commandment in no way forbids legitimate violence, including the death penalty and war. God wants justice, not sentimentality, and the rationing out of guilt to victim and criminal alike. Judaism's position is a more balanced one, forming the basis for the social order. Hillel, the great sage, contemporary of Jesus, taught as follows:

> If I am not for myself, who is for me?
> And when I am for myself, what am I?
> And if not now, when?

These three things must be kept in the balance: the right of self-defense, the responsibility to the other, and the imperatives of occasion and circumstance. Of these, justice is made; without them we feed on that lugubrious sentimentality—"the criminal was toilet-trained too soon," "he is a member of an abused minority," "the crime was not criminal because the miscreant has had a less privileged life than the victim"—by which society is abused, then destroyed.

The sages of Judaism maintain the opposite view: justice, tempered by mercy, is owed to everyone, including the victim of violence and the nation coveted by its neighbor. Everyone has rights, everyone has responsibilities, equally parceled out by the *passionate* God who cares for us all.

Jacob Neusner is Distinguished Research Professor of Religious Studies at the University of South Florida and life member of Clare Hall, Cambridge University.

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VI. ADULTERY

by Theodore Pappas

When Paris seduces Helen, the Spartan king's wife, and steals her away to Troy, it leads to a war that ravages a people and destroys a culture. That a single act of adultery could breed such passion and bloodshed is incomprehensible in the late 20th century. In fact, when sociologist Annette Lawson conducted a study of adultery in the 1980's, she was amazed to discover how few people could even define the act without qualifying their answer with carefully measured words. Redolent of sin and shame, crime and punishment, the very word struck her respondents as archaic and insensitive.

Once upon a time people knew what the word meant and took it very seriously. "And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death" (Leviticus 20:10). Of course, the Scriptures were written in the long dark night of patriarchy, when every husband was a Petruchio who owned and lorded over his wife: "I will be master of what is mine own: / She is my goods, my chattels; she is my house, / My household stuff, my field, my barn, / My horse, my ox, my ass, my any thing." A woman who slept with someone other than her spouse was an adulteress whose punishment was death by stoning, whereas a married man who slept with an unmarried woman was guilty only of fornication, a sin often associated with mere greed.

The wife's status did improve, in theory, by Augustine's altering of the order of the Ten Commandments to that still followed by Lutherans and Catholics. For by uniting the first two verses—concerning other gods and graven images—it was possible to split the last one into two, thereby liberating women from the category of animals and objects; hence the separate commandments on coveting a neighbor's wife and coveting his "ox, his ass, nor anything that is his."

However, the wife remained the neighbor's legal property and as such could qualify as "stolen goods." Adultery, in this context, was an act of theft. It meant taking not only another man's "property," but also robbing his children of the affections and perhaps even physical presence of the family's prime nurturer. And if the bastard offspring from the unholy union were introduced into the household, either overtly or covertly under false pretense of paternity, then adultery also meant stealing the inheritance from the rightful heirs. This, as Dr. Johnson noted, was the justification for the double standard.

The idea of adultery as theft has a social and cultural dimension as well. Because marriage and the family have always been the institutions that maintain the stability of Western society, any act that cuts loose these anchors has been regarded as treason, in miniature, against the commonwealth. In fact, no theme is more common to Western literature. Whether it is Kent's appreciation in *King Lear* of those "holy cords a-twain / Which are too intrince to unloose," Imogen's warning in *Cymbeline* that "The breach of culture / Is breach of all," or Malory's realization that Lancelot and Gwenyver's affair means "thys realme holy destroyed and myscheved," the message is the same—that the breaking of one bond portends the breaking of all others, that individual transgression breeds social and cultural chaos.

But it is on the personal and spiritual level that adultery most poignantly affects us as theft. For it steals from the marriage and from the loyal partner in particular that special bond of trust and faith that was forged in His presence, nurtured over time, and without which many marriages cannot survive. This "theft" is what most couples cannot forgive and forget and what so often leads them to divorce.

This shift from the social and cultural to the personal and spiritual is dramatically illustrated in the story of Jesus and the adulteress.

> And the scribes and the Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? . . . So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

The scribes and Pharisees, steeped as they are in the rigid and labyrinthine Hebraic codes, can think of nothing but an impersonal application of the law, whereas Jesus focuses on the spiritual and the personal and even directs attention to the sins of the accusers and not of the accused. The woman's sin, however, remains sin.

Of course, literary passages and biblical parables are still invoked for the more difficult questions on *Jeopardy*, but as sources of moral uplift and spiritual enlightenment their day of mass appeal has clearly waned. It is no longer Shakespeare, Donne, Jesus, and the Decalogue, but rather *Donahue*, *Murphy Brown*—yes, Dan Quayle was right—and the Gospel According to Dr. Ruth that now mold our sense of moral rectitude. Magic Johnson, after all, is a "national hero."

In the 1960's and 70's adultery even became a virtue. Marketed as a sign of emotional health, it was called "finding oneself" and "self-actualization" and eventually became an "alternative lifestyle" known as "open marriage." Movies like *The Harrad Experiment* and *Bob and Carol and Ted and Alice* popularly hailed this moral transformation. In the 1980's we simply killed off what remained of free will, denied all responsibility for our thoughts and deeds, and then explained away transgressions as "addictions" and "diseases." Women became "addicted" to destructive relationships of the kind depicted in the best-seller *Women Who Love Too Much*, while men were suddenly afflicted with the "disease" of sexual compulsiveness, for which "Sexaholics Anonymous" offered a 12-step cure.

When the Bulgarian girl asks Rick in *Casablanca* whether it would really be wrong for her to "do something bad"—that is, to sleep with Louis in order to get the exit visas that she and her husband need—he does not read her a lecture on situation ethics. Instead, he tells her: "Go back to Bulgaria." Although Rick arranges for the girl to buy the visas outright so that her virtue can be preserved, his original reply was more than a quip. There are worse ways of dealing with moral dilemmas than by returning to a tradition or by "going home" spiritually, even if home happens to be Bulgaria.

Theodore Pappas is the managing editor of Chronicles.

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VII. STEALING

by Murray N. Rothbard

"Thou shalt not steal," along with the other commandments, is refreshingly direct, clear, and absolute. There is no need to "deconstruct the text" or for anguished inquiry into what God *really* meant. Evidently, too, God was not a practitioner of situation ethics. The commandment did *not* say: "Thou shalt not steal, unless thou feelest that thy need is greater than the owner's." Neither did the commandment say: "Thou shalt not steal, unless thou really needest the money." In particular, the commandment calls into profound question the entire existence of the modern welfare state. For God also did not say: "Thou shalt not steal, unless thou is a legislator or a duly certified official of the state." There are no exceptions to or exemptions in this commandment.

How can taxation be theft? How can it *not*? Theft is taking someone's property by force. If A grabs X's property by force, that is theft. If A and his buddy B do the same thing, they too are stealing or committing theft. And even if A, B, C, and most of the neighbors in the community grab X's property by force, the act of stealing remains the same. For at what point does the *number* committing the sin negate the sin? Even if it is an IRS official who grabs your property, as duly authorized by Congress, the act still remains theft. Whatever way you slice it, and regardless of the number of people involved in the theft or of their official titles, Peter is being robbed to pay Paul as well as the robbers themselves, who must of course acquire their handling fee.

Put another way, this commandment directly implies that the property rights of everyone in society must be respected, that they must not be invaded. But what is taxation but aggression against private property? It is not an accident that one of the great traditions of Western thought is the likening of the ruler of the state to a bandit writ large. Cicero tells the parable of the pirate and Alexander the Great. When the pirate was dragged into court, the king berated him for piracy and brigandage and asked him what impulse had led him to make the sea unsafe with his one little ship. The pirate boldly and trenchantly replied: "The same impulse which has led you [Alexander] to make the whole world unsafe."

In *The City of God*, the great St. Augustine borrowed and expanded the parable:

> For it was an elegant and true reply that was made to Alexander the Great by a certain pirate whom he had captured. When the king asked him what he was thinking of, that he should molest the sea, he said with defiant independence: "The same as you when you molest the world! Since I do this with a little ship I am called a pirate. You do it with a great fleet and are called emperor."

In the same passage, Augustine likened kingdoms to "great robber bands" and the latter to "little kingdoms." When the robber band ("this plague") grows large enough so that it "holds territory" and "seizes cities and subdues people," then "it more conspicuously assumes the name of kingdom," the name accruing to the robber gang "not for any subtraction of cupidity, but by addition of impunity."

When I first became interested in political theory, I eagerly read *General Theory of Law and State* by the great early 20th-century Viennese legal theorist Hans Kelsen. Kelsen, a legal positivist, tried to set forth a deductive, objective, scientific, and "value-free" theory of law and the state. Early in the book, Kelsen came to one of the critical questions of political theory: What distinguishes the edicts of the state from the orders of a bandit gang? Kelsen's answer, however, was less than satisfactory: the edicts of the state are "valid," whereas the bandit decrees are not. Searching fruitlessly for an explication of "valid," I finally realized that for Kelsen, the orders of the state are valid *because* they are orders of the state, an absurdly question-begging solution to the crucial problem. I promptly lost interest in Kelsen's deductive system. Once again, the wisdom of the ancients proved far more perceptive than modern "value-free science."

We live in an age where we are confronted with wholesale violations of the commandment against theft. Every day we face unorganized violent robbery "from below"; and every day we are looted systematically and regularly "from above" by the minions of the state, backed by the power of organized coercion. While conservative moralists tend to concentrate on the pervasive violations of some of the other commandments, they should not overlook what has happened to this one. In fact, the current system of taxation and theft provides economic support for those who break the other commandments and builds up and sustains the state apparatus that blazes the path, leads the cheering squad, and often even provides the finances for these violations. For anyone seeking to restore a society of commandment-keepers, bringing back and enforcing the injunction against theft should be of prime importance. ◈

Murray N. Rothbard is a professor of economics at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and vice-president for academic affairs at the Ludwig von Mises Institute.

VIII. BEARING FALSE WITNESS

by E. Christian Kopff

In the ancient world, the Persians taught their young men to ride, shoot straight, and tell the truth. The Hebrew Bible inveighs against false testimony. Greek thought returns again and again to the idea of *aletheia* or truth, the possibility of knowing about a world outside our own impressions and desires. Anglo-Saxon culture made telling the truth to a jury an important part of developing a free state. Jefferson felt that the same standards needed to be applied to the press. The press should be free to tell the truth, but not to lie. Madison had to explain to his mentor that a standard that punished that kind of falsehood would soon mean the disappearance of the press. Our modern world agrees with Madison.

In today's world the press is disappearing, anyhow. Every month or so another paper goes under. The process means little to the average citizen. We buy the paper for the sales advertised on Wednesday and the TV supplement on Sunday. As long as we are paying for it anyway, we read the sports and

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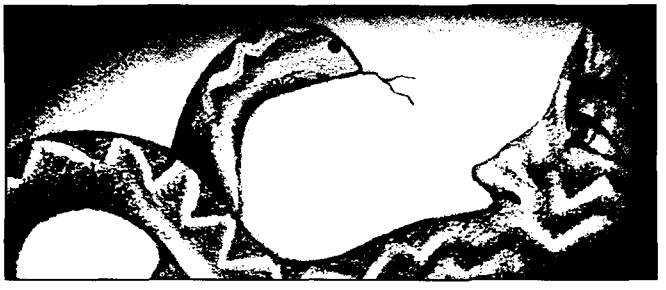
the letters to the editor. Adults do not believe other sections of the paper, although occasionally we notice teenagers who do not know any better. We are so used to the atmosphere of lying and deception which permeates our society that we rarely even remark on it.

Usually the victims do not even protest. When a Denver paper reported that a governor of Colorado had told an audience of older citizens, "You have a duty to die," the governor objected, explaining that he was talking about the extravagant costs of run-away medical technology and that he had actually said, "We all have a duty to die." The paper, quite unusually, apologized, but years go by and the local Boulder paper warned the governor this summer that his comments were liable to be misinterpreted and "divisive," when in fact they had been misreported. The Vice-President of the United States makes a speech on Negro illegitimacy. The press tells us that the speech was about a television show. The Vice-President does not object. He goes along with the misrepresentation.

Sometimes known truths are hidden. After the evidence for Martin Luther King's plagiarism was published, it turned out that every section of the Establishment press had long known about it. "We decide what's news," as an important newspaper executive once said in my presence.

Of course, life could not go on if we did not tell the little lies and avoid the crude truths that would offend and wound to no purpose. "That new hairstyle looks so good on you." "You look great in that fashionable short dress." "Great book review." "Fine sermon." What good would it do to tell the truth? It is a question of prudence, and prudence is a much underrated virtue. Luther tells us that part of not bearing false witness is "to put the best construction on everything." We Americans have developed that hint into the art of advertising. Can we really tell the difference anymore?



"You don't print the truth," Paul Newman tells newspaperwoman Sally Field in *Absence of Malice*. "You print what people say. The truth doesn't just turn up." The search for truth, the effort not to bear false witness, is at bottom a moral effort. Most men are driven by their passions, and, wrote Housman, "the faintest of all human passions is the love of truth." Our society, however, is premised on science and information. The progress we want, the economic growth we feel we need, requires discovery. Discovery requires a self-sacrificing commitment to a reality that, if not exactly outside ourselves, is at least more than ourselves and our own desires and wants and needs. We found that making it up is easier than checking our hypotheses by observation. Soon we lost the ability even to make it up. Then we were reduced to copying. We print what people say. We repeat what people say. We do not check our references. (Most Americans do not know what the last sentence means.) We stop caring that we are setting an example for fellow workers, for students, for our own children.

As our society sinks into the hungry quicksand of bankruptcy and ruin, we pretend that there is some technical, political, or social solution. Our situation cannot be due to a moral defect in us. Anyway, we did not make up that story. We are just repeating a joke Jay Leno told last night. If we asked for a reference for the remark, it might look rude. We believe in a kindhearted God. He gives us C's when we deserve F's and awards us A's when our work is barely worth a B. He would not condemn a soul, or a city, or a society because it had ceased to care about truth, because in carelessness or malice it bore false witness against its neighbor. Would He?

E. Christian Kopff is a professor of Greek and Latin at the University of Colorado in Boulder.

IX. COVETING THY NEIGHBOR'S WIFE

by Harold O.J. Brown

The Decalogue consists of ten commandments, but they are not numbered in the Bible. Several of them contain more than one clause, and it is not always clear where one ends and the next begins. Jews and most Protestant Christians, wishing to underscore the prohibition against images, consider the commandment "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image" a separate commandment, the second. Roman Catholics and Lutherans, for example, run this prohibition together with the first, "I am the Lord thy God . . . thou shalt have none other gods before me." This leaves them, as they approach the end of the list, one commandment short. Consequently they divide a commandment that the Jews consider one, "Thou shalt not covet," into two, creating a separate ninth commandment, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife," and turning the next phrase into the tenth: "Neither shalt thou covet thy neighbor's house, his field, or his manservant, his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or anything that is his." The short form is usually "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods." (The first listing of the commandments, in the description of Moses on Mount Sinai in Exodus puts the neighbor's house before his wife, followed by all the other persons, animals, and things, giving a measure of plausibility to the short form that most Protestants call the tenth commandment: "Thou shalt not covet.")

There is a nice symmetry to the Catholic version: the sixth commandment (seventh, in the Jewish counting) forbids the act of adultery, the next one the act of stealing. Then the ninth and tenth forbid the thoughts as well as the deeds, first the thought of adultery, then the thought of robbery. This brings to mind the rather alarming words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, "That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." These are the words that caused then-presidential candidate Jimmy Carter to admit in his famous *Playboy* interview to having "committed adultery in his heart." Perhaps many readers take comfort in the fact that Jesus does not add the specific warning that he attached to calling one's brother a

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fool, namely, the threat of hell fire. Nevertheless, one does not have to have the sensitivity of Jimmy Carter to be troubled by what Jesus says about adultery in the heart, and the Decalogue puts sins of the heart right up with murder, adultery, and robbery.

What does it mean to covet a wife, a house, or goods? What does it mean to "lust after" someone in your heart? Moral theologians are generally agreed that, as Calvin writes in the *Institutes*, "fantasies, flitting aimlessly about the mind and then vanishing, cannot be condemned as instances of covetousness." (Calvin cites this objection without actually agreeing, and goes on to warn against dallying with the fantasy.) In any event, the temptation alone is not regarded as sinful, until one entertains it, dwells on it, and inwardly assents to it, perhaps held back from the deed only by fear of the consequences.

It is legitimate to marry, and all but the most disagreeable theologians acknowledge that sexual desire between spouses is not merely biblically acceptable but actually commanded (*e.g.*, Proverbs 5:18-19, "rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind and the pleasant roe"). What is meant by coveting the neighbor's wife? It is not desiring to have a wife, if unmarried, for that is indeed a legitimate desire, but the desire to have someone else's wife, taking her away from him, a desire that is rendered doubly culpable if one already has a wife. Being charmed or momentarily attracted by another's spouse does not become coveting in the sense prohibited by the commandment until, in Calvin's expression, one begins to "rave and revel" in the desire.

Most Christian catechisms—Roman Catholic and Protestant alike—use the commandments against adultery and extramarital coveting to warn against all indulgence in sexual fantasies, but that is not the actual point of the commandments. Both the commandment against adultery and against coveting plainly have sinning with or lusting after a particular person in mind, not the more general desire to have sexual fulfillment. The desire for sexual fulfillment is an appetite, like hunger, and normal enough, but the desire to take another's wife goes too far. Indeed the sense of the commandments here is plain: both adultery (the act) and coveting (indulgence in the lustful desire) are condemned less for their physical aspect, which in fact does not exist in the case of mere coveting, than because they both violate what is perhaps the most fundamental principle of biblical religion, covenant love.

For both Judaism and Christianity God is not merely a God of love, but the God of covenant love. What this means is that God's attitude toward us—toward individuals, toward Israel, toward the church, toward mankind in general—is not an attitude of generalized benevolence, but an attitude of love and generosity, which by its very nature demands loyalty and faithfulness in return—in theological terms, covenant love. God wants us to be faithful to Him and gives us opportunities to learn what this means by being faithful to one another.

Sexuality is ordained by God the Creator and is indeed His gift, but a gift that is good and beneficial only within the framework that God intends it: just as the love of God is not a generalized warm fuzziness, but covenant-keeping on both sides, the sexual love that God approves is not *mere* passion, but passion within the covenant-keeping relationship of marriage.

Because covenant-keeping is an attitude of the heart, not merely an exercise in the letter of the law, coveting another's wife is much more serious than one might think: it shows that covenant-keeping is not important to us, and it casts a dark shadow over the covenant that we are supposed to keep with God Himself. The commandments are not there to keep us from enjoying ourselves, but to train us in faithfulness, which is *sine qua non* for fellowship with God—not that one must never lapse, but that one's relationship to God must be characterized by covenant-keeping rather than covenant-breaking. Adultery is a physical violation of the covenant with one's spouse, just as idolatry is a physical violation of the covenant with our God. One does not actually have to worship an idol or burn incense before it to break the covenant with God: when one, in one's heart, begins to prefer Baal or Astarte or some modern equivalent to the God of the Covenant, the covenant is already damaged. Coveting a neighbor's wife damages the covenant of marriage, even though no overt act has been committed. At least by implication, it places the whole concept of covenant love in jeopardy and implies that we will be no more faithful to God than we were to a spouse. God's covenant love is the strongest power in the universe and not to be trifled with; our covenant of marriage is but a pale reflection, but it too is important enough to warrant a commandment for its protection. ◁

Harold O.J. Brown is the director of The Rockford Institute Center on Religion and Society, and Forman Professor of Theology and Ethics at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois.

X. COVETING THY NEIGHBOR'S PROPERTY

by George Garrett

It seems almost quaint, certainly ironic, to be here and now thinking out loud and in print about some of the contemporary implications of one of the Ten Commandments, presumably for the benefit if not the pleasure of one's fellow restless inhabitants of these last, dying years of our savage century. It is even more ironic when you pause to consider that this particular society we have created and now have to live in, though overwhelmingly Christian in its actual numbers, has been steadily transformed into a secular institution wherein church and state are not so much separate as they are obdurately antagonistic—or would be if the socially sensitive churches, themselves, had not allowed the Ten Commandments to devolve into Ten Suggestions. The commandments against coveting "thy neighbor's wife, nor his servant, nor his maid, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is his"—ought to be a point of conflict, a battlefield between the two. The state, with the secular covenant it at once proclaims and enforces, bases much of its policy, domestic and foreign, and its consumer-driven economy precisely on the constant incitement of the basic covetous impulses of its citizenry. At this late stage of things, it is almost absurd not to covet anything and everything your neighbor happens to possess; and, indeed, current events—as, for example, the recent Los Angeles Looting Days ("95 Looting Days Until Xmas")—seem to have

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clearly established the right of certain of our protected minorities to go well beyond simple coveting and to take whatever they think they want without any shame or any serious consequences.

All the conventional manifestations of coveting—greed, envy, lust, rage, gluttony, sloth, and pride—are so familiar as to be (in secular terms) neither vices nor virtues, but merely descriptions of the chief characteristics, the "reality" of humankind. It would be too funny for words if it were not also so unbearably sad. "The American Dream" has ceased to be a vision of liberty and become, instead, a program for social mobility.

When the New Law, with its two essential injunctions, replaced, for Christians at least, the snarled legalistic complexities of the Judaic Old Law, the commandments were not, in truth, diminished, but boldly enlarged to include the covert motions of the soul as well as its overt offices. The New Law tests motivation, the secrets of the heart, as well as actions. The distinctions between *caritas* and *cupiditas* are to be applied absolutely. By those standards we are one and all sinners. We one and all, of course, covet what we have not and are not and that which we ought not to, even (Lord have mercy) our blessed saints who are able to discard all desires saving the last one for the crown (thorns or gold, no matter, no difference) of sainthood.

The Catechism of the service of Confirmation in *The Book of Common Prayer* (1559) offered a blending of the Old and the New in reply to the question: "What is thy duty to thy neighbor?" A little part of the answer pictures a world that anyone, except perhaps a bureaucrat or politician, would find as sensible as it is admirable: "To hurt nobody by word or deed. To be true and just in all my dealing. To bear no malice or hatred in my heart. To keep my hands from picking and stealing, and my tongue from evil speaking, lying, and slandering. To keep my body in temperance, soberness, and chastity. Not to covet nor desire other men's goods. But learn and labor truly to get mine own living, and to do my duty in that state of life, unto which it shall please God to call me." The man or child who could say those things today might well be taken for an alien creature from outer space, though those words and ideals were shared by a cloud of ancestors for close to two thousand years.

The New Law has been a great boon to literature in all forms, not only insisting on a deeper, more dimensional accounting of character and motivation, in both hero and antihero, but also in preserving the great texts of our past, the pre-Christian classics, as being as true and useful now as then and ever shall be. This treasury of our past is, to be sure, now much threatened, in danger from colossal ignorance and from a generation without any law, old or new, or any order above and beyond the satisfaction of all appetite at any cost to others and themselves.

One of the earliest and latest stories we choose to tell ourselves is of the character who covets something (anything) desperately and how it comes to pass that the desired thing is acquired only to prove to be something other than the troubled heart imagined and hungered for. For centuries this was the line of comedy, dark and light; for to be covetous was to be foolish. Lately, in our secular literature at least, it is taken more seriously and sometimes aims for tragedy. Well, either way, there will be no end of it, just as (has the century proved anything else so eloquently?) there are no imaginable limits to human wickedness, cruelty, and folly.

George Garrett is Henry Hoyns Professor of English at the University of Virginia. His latest book is My Silk Purse and Yours: The Publishing Scene and American Literary Art *(University of Missouri Press).*

John's Plan

by Gloria G. Brame

John, as you lie in your stormy bed tonight,
wishing you could keep your memories intact
and that, before new light, triumphs you have dreamed
come true and that you rule every delight,
every one with whom you've made contact, think:
we love the unknown and crave what we should fear.

You created your own life ten thousand times,
reformed its shape to a chain of paradigms
and held fast to the flesh from which, once secured,
you grew disenfranchised. You wrote your own god
and dispatched appeals on immaculate sheets.
Prayers ring true only when they say what one feels.

The most terrible fraud is the illusion
that passion is conversion, that one loses
by being more himself. The blooming tree
holds its leaves unthinkingly, finds its own plan,
yet fits the complex moral hierarchy.
Independent forces confound gravity.

John, beyond the next street and the next are worlds
clamorous with eccentric soliloquies.
At every corner, communion goes awry.
The cities of our souls teem with enterprise.
If you are awake, you cannot compromise,
nor crave the unknown and fear what you should love.

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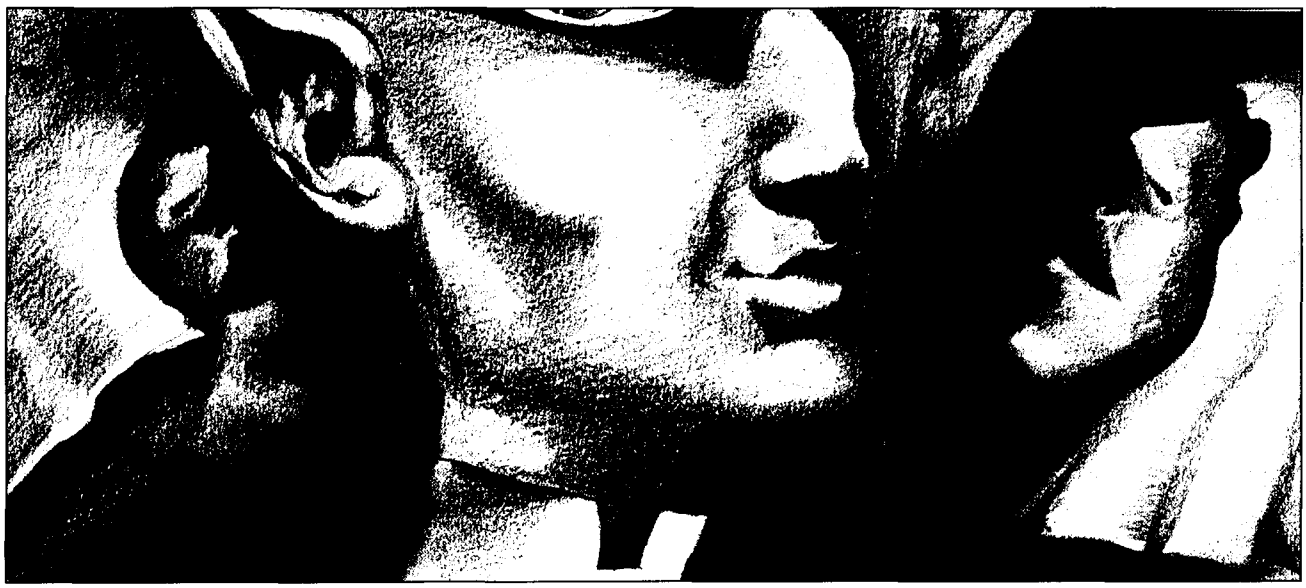
Priests and Pedophiles

The Attack on the Catholic Church

by Philip Jenkins



Anna Mycek-Wodecki

"Catholic priests claim to be celibate, but we know what they're really up to. Most of them seduce women, the rest like little boys. Priests trap them in the confessional, and when the priests are found out, the bishops let them off with a slap on the wrist. Celibacy, hierarchy, secrecy, the confessional—those are the things that make the Catholic Church the sink of iniquity it is." Put in various ways, sentiments like these have been the common currency of anticlerical and anti-Catholic rhetoric for almost as long as there has been a Catholic Church. We might think that these ideas would by now have gone the way of the other myths and stereotypes that once adhered to (say) Jews or blacks; but in fact, the attack on Roman Catholic clergy as sexual monsters is at this very moment reaching a crescendo in North America.

The panic over "clergy sex abuse," or "priestly pedophilia," has reached far beyond the trashy television talk shows and now threatens to become a devastatingly effective vehicle for anti-Catholic activism and legislation. This manufactured and manipulated crisis is being used as a justification for the wholesale evisceration of Catholic tradition, with liberal and feminist groups the chief beneficiaries. This is a classic example of the artificial generation of a social panic for partisan ends; and as yet, few of those under attack seem to understand what is happening, still fewer are able to organize a defense.

Since colonial days, fear and hatred of the Catholic Church have been among the most powerful political forces in American history; anti-Catholic sentiment has ignited riots, spawned political parties, and determined elections. And while other forms of prejudice have increasingly been condemned in public discourse, this specific type of bigotry remains remarkably acceptable, particularly in liberal circles. Apart from the traditional stereotypes—lascivious priests, tyrannical bishops, the cynical exploitation of a superstitious laity—we now have a new battery of myths, suggesting that the Catholic Church is the most prominent obstacle to the rights and interests of women and homosexuals. Issues like abortion, contraception, gay rights, AIDS education, and the ordination of women have made the Church the primary protagonist of "wrong" (*i.e.*, traditional) views in American society.

A price has had to be paid for this stubborn refusal to conform, especially in the distortions and vicious attacks regularly presented by the media. Any doubts about the fundamental anti-Catholicism of liberal society should have been put to rest by the 1989 assault by AIDS activists on a mass in St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City, during which a series of outrages culminated in the desecration of the Host. Hate crimes are nothing new in this country, but this was one of the rare instances in which the media took the side of the "protesters" and all but unanimously depicted the victim group as having merited this just anger. We observe the same attitude when gay rights parades feature grotesque caricatures of priests and nuns, whose closest precedents are the portraits of Jews in the Nazi paper *Der Stürmer*. It is inconceivable that any other ethnic or religious group would receive such treatment; but then again, hatred of Catholicism has rightly been described as "the thinking man's anti-Semitism."

Philip Jenkins is a professor in the Administration of Justice Department at Pennsylvania State University.

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For all the media attacks, the Church has remained remarkably resilient and has even won political successes, for example through its leadership of the pro-life movement. Its opponents had therefore to be even more resourceful in seeking effective weapons for sabotage. One problem they faced was that many of the traditional rhetorical devices of prejudice no longer worked, because of changing religious attitudes. With the Bible playing so little role in mainstream society, it was scarcely effective to argue that Catholicism was "unscriptural" or that the Pope could somehow be identified with the Scarlet Woman or the Whore of Babylon. However, there were other things that had replaced religion as the most cherished social value and that could be used to denigrate the Church. The ideal solution would have been to identify the Church with racism; but that was wholly implausible in view of the consistent liberal activism of clergy in this area. That left the two other modern shibboleths, namely sexuality and children, here combined in the late 20th-century nightmare of the sexual abuse of children. Might it be possible to revive the ancient stereotype of the priest as sexual predator?

The solution to the anti-Catholic dilemma emerged in the mid-1980's, with the first of several cases involving the repeated sexual abuse of children by priests and members of religious orders. One of the most celebrated was that of Father Gilbert Gauthe in Louisiana, who was first identified as a molester in the early 1970's but was moved to several other parishes before his crimes came to public awareness. In other words, the local hierarchy seemed to connive with his horrific crimes by failing to intervene at a sufficiently early stage and in fact by placing at risk the children to whose parishes he was subsequently sent. This tragic case involved (at best) serious misjudgments and organizational failings on the part of the Church, and there was a widespread scandal when the affair came to court in 1985.

Over the next three years, there were dozens of notorious cases following broadly similar lines, sometimes involving the manufacture and distribution of child pornography. In response, there emerged literature suggesting that there was more to the problem than the existence of a few individuals with serious moral failings. Clergy sex abuse was a social epidemic on a vast scale, and it was permitted, even encouraged, by the structure and institutions of the Church. The lack of full investigation and disclosure permitted "pedophile priests" to carry on their sinister careers for years. Another recurrent theme concerned the reluctance of secular law enforcement authorities to arrest and prosecute these legions of delinquent clergy. This appears to revive the archaic charge of "dual loyalty," the suggestion that Catholics holding secular office obey the demands of their church before their public duties.

By the late 1980's, the materials for a panic were in place, in terms of cohorts of self-styled "experts" like Jason Berry and Marie Fortune and of a literature applying to clerical problems the wisdom of secular child abuse experts. This literature broadly accepted an essentially feminist analysis, that child abuse was a manifestation of patriarchal tyranny, an all but ubiquitous atrocity that had appalling and lifelong effects on its millions of victims. As Father Andrew Greeley has written, abusers are far worse than alcoholics or drunk drivers: "alcoholics are dangerous only to themselves, their families, and the people they smash with their cars, but each pedophile is a threat to the future lives of hundreds of children."

These beliefs supported the view that clerical abuse was both pervasive and destructive, which came as music to the ears of a growing profession of lawyers who now won huge liability lawsuits against Catholic dioceses. It is estimated that by the mid-1990's, the cumulative total of damages from this type of case will exceed a billion dollars. The ensuing scandals have had a snowball effect, encouraging past victims, real or imaginary, to come forward and register their complaints—all of which gives real social momentum to the panic. Lawyers have been among the greatest beneficiaries, but also significant were the profits to be made in organizing and teaching the countless seminars, workshops, training programs, and "encounter groups" on abuse-related issues that now litter the advertisement pages of every religious newspaper and journal. Of course, Catholic clergy were not the only targets of the panic, and we found lawsuits against most of the major Christian denominations, as well as Jewish groups; but the image of the celibate priest naturally attracted particular suspicion and hostility.

There were sizable vested interests at stake (both financial and ideological) in generating a "clerical abuse" problem, and these efforts reached fruition in the early years of the present decade. Following new Catholic-focused scandals, especially in the diocese of Chicago and in the Canadian province of Newfoundland, reports of "priestly pedophiles" became an almost daily occurrence in the media—though in some cases, investigations were reaching back to alleged misdeeds committed many years before. Recently, there has been great scandal about a case of this sort where a priest in North Attleboro, Massachusetts, was said to have been involved in hundreds of incidents as long ago as the 1960's. The literature on the topic mushroomed, with major investigative reports in most leading newspapers, as well as in *Time*, *Newsweek*, and journals like *Ms.* and *Vanity Fair*.

In this atmosphere, both secular and ecclesiastical authorities struggled to respond, with proposed solutions potentially draconian. The diocese of Chicago has now suggested a lay-dominated board that would hear and investigate charges against priests, even when such accusations were received over an anonymous hotline. Accused clergy would be suspended at an early stage of the process.

For no one was permitted to doubt that this was a crisis. The language employed by the media repeatedly suggested both the vast scale of the problem and the role played by official cover-ups and wrongdoing in high places. This was the "S&L disaster of the Catholic Church," an "ecclesiastical Watergate," a "meltdown." Andrew Greeley drew comparisons with the Clarence Thomas/Anita Hill farrago, which in contemporary liberal martyrology represents the ultimate manifestation of a patriarchal cover-up of male wrongdoing. According to Catholic writer Thomas Doyle, pedophilia represents "the most serious problem that we in the Church have faced in centuries": quite a claim when the issue is considered alongside the Enlightenment, Darwinism, wholesale secularization, Communism, and Nazism. When the problem was quantified, it appeared to be immense. Several accounts indicated that five or six percent of American priests might be "pedophiles" or molesters, suggesting a total of nearly three thousand troubled and dangerous individuals.

In a full-scale panic, it is often difficult to pause and ask whether the concern is entirely justified or whether there is any substance whatever to the issue; but this "crisis," more than

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most, presents a number of quite significant difficulties. For example, it cannot be denied that some priests, being human, commit serious crimes, while large institutions tend sometimes to favor self-interest and self-protection over the public good. But we knew this already. What is more contentious, and indeed wildly speculative, is the estimate of the scale of the problem. Who has the slightest idea whether the number of priests who molest children is twenty percent of the total or whether it is a fraction of one percent? And contrary to the impression derived from "experts," we do *not* know much about the impact of noncoercive molestation on children or adolescents: in the late 1970's, most therapists thought the effects were relatively trivial; in the early 1990's, we think they are devastating. Who is to know?

Problems are defined by language, and the issue of "clergy abuse" is no exception. The term builds on an existing fund of socially available knowledge and imagery. Since we know what "abuse" is (or think we know) and what clergy are, we therefore can work out what the terms mean in combination. "Clergy abuse" means exploitative molestation of children by priests or religious; or so it should. But looking into the somewhat bizarre literature on the topic, it swiftly becomes apparent that "clerical abuse" means no such thing. In effect, the term relates to any sexual contact between a clergyman and any of his parishioners, male or female, no matter how adult or consenting. A recent article in *Ms.* defined "clergy abuse" with incredible breadth as "inappropriate sexual behavior or sexual contact with parishioners, clients or employees." In 1991, the journal *Episcopal Life* published an irate and deeply felt series on "clergy sexual abuse," which it presented as one of the gravest crises facing that church; yet most of the case studies offered involved heterosexual relationships between consenting adults. We can imagine that a woman in her 30's might feel "abused" or exploited in such a relationship, but this is hardly on a moral par with the actions of a schoolyard molester.

Priestly pedophilia has become a superb weapon to be used against the Church, because it presents a stereotype that appears gravely threatening to the most loyal Catholic parishioners themselves. Pedophilia also seems so unquestionably evil that it becomes impossible to challenge the critics: to question the panic is to attack the pathetic victims or—still worse—to exhibit the grave pathology known as 'denial.'

In the Catholic Church, we hear much about "pedophilia," an attractive term because of the alliterative quality of "priestly pedophilia." Like "molestation" or "abuse," this word suggests involvement with children, ranging in age from toddlers to pubescent youngsters, and further suggests forced acts that partake to some extent of the nature of rape. These acts have certainly occurred, indeed in some of the more notorious cases. However, by no means did all of the scandals involve "molestation," and many did not include victims we can accurately characterize as "children." When considered in detail, perhaps eighty or ninety percent of the cases involved sexual liaisons between priests and boys or young men in their teens or early 20's.

This behavior may be reprehensible in terms of ecclesiastical and moral codes of sexual conduct, specifically in violating vows of celibacy; and it might well be that the power relationship between priest and young parishioner renders it difficult to speak of it as fully consensual. However, the nature of the act would seem to be better characterized as "homosexuality" than "pedophilia" or molestation. In the words of a Nova Scotia bishop, following the scandal at the Mount Cashel home in Newfoundland, "we are not dealing with classic pedophilia. I do not want to argue that homosexual activity between a priest and an adolescent is therefore moral. Rather it does not have the horrific character of pedophilia."

This is neither to defend nor to justify the conduct, but it is necessary to stress that conventional language may exaggerate both the degree of force used on and the nature of harm done to the supposed victim. Failure to discriminate between homosexuality and pedophilia was long a feature of antihomosexual polemic; it is surprising to find such a confusion of terminology in contemporary liberal circles.

But there are many oddities in this controversy, many areas in which our normal expectations about partisan attitudes are confounded. For instance, the Catholic Church has for years recognized the problem of abusers in its ranks and has attempted to deal with the problem in a humane and therapeutic way, refusing to invoke the criminal justice system. Offending clerics have been treated both as sinners capable of reform and as sick individuals deserving treatment rather than punishment. This would seem to be a model example of penological liberalism, yet it is this very humanity that has earned the wrath of liberals and feminists who demand that offenders be subject to the rigorous penalties of law for their sexual misdeeds.

Can this be correct? Liberals denouncing homosexuality? Liberals calling for the police and courts to enforce moral laws? This would all be very surprising if we did not recognize the deeper anti-Catholic agenda at work here. Priestly pedophilia has become a superb weapon to be used against the Church, because it presents a stereotype that appears gravely threatening to the most loyal Catholic parishioners themselves. Pedophilia also seems so unquestionably evil that it becomes impossible to challenge the critics: to question the panic is to attack the pathetic victims or—still worse—to exhibit the grave pathology known as "denial." It is simply not acceptable to believe or to state that some, even a handful, of the alleged victims might be less than impeccable in their stories. In child abuse, as in Catholic doctrine, there is a firm but selective belief in infallibility.

Moreover, if in fact the problem is as bad as has been described, then desperate measures are required to deal with it; and by a remarkable coincidence, the best solutions appear to be found in the traditional liberal and anti-Catholic agenda—measures that strike at the heart of Catholic belief, teaching, and practice. If this statement seems hyperbolic, consider several specific practices that have long been attacked by

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liberal critics of the Church—celibacy, confession, the male priesthood. All have been denounced in the aftermath of the sex scandals, and the Church has had to struggle to defend its traditions—needless to say, with the critics receiving the wholehearted support of the media. As a rhetorical device, the association is brilliant: to oppose the "reform" of celibacy or women's ordination is to defend child abuse and even to attract suspicion to oneself as a friend and accomplice of abusers.

There are many illustrations of this assault. For example, there is a detailed if partisan study of the Newfoundland affair in Michael Harris's 1990 book *Unholy Orders*, which describes the many protest meetings of parishioners and other citizen groups. A typical statement in these meetings was that "the only way to purge the Church was to allow priests to marry and to open the seminary doors to women." "Other radical means were proposed," continues Harris, "including the abolition of confession so that fallen priests wouldn't have an easy means of homing in on their victims." During 1989, moreover, the Canadian hierarchy found itself under intense popular pressure to consider permitting married priests.

The crisis has not yet reached national proportions in the United States, but all the same indignant voices have been heard. In the early 1980's, the panic over child abuse led virtually all states to pass mandatory reporting statutes, providing harsh criminal penalties for "any person" failing to report known or suspected abuse. The sweeping legislation failed to provide exemption for groups like doctors and therapists, who had traditionally enjoyed a privileged confidential relationship with their clients, and even demanded compliance by clergy. Only a handful of states provided clergy exemption, which technically means that a Catholic priest is breaking the law if he fails to expose an offense he has discovered (or *suspected*) through the confessional. One law review article terms this "the pending gauntlet to free exercise (of religion)." It is difficult to imagine any jurisdiction foolhardy enough to risk such a dramatic church-state confrontation, but the possibility is much less unthinkable than it would have been five years ago. We may yet see bishops and priests in prison for respecting the sanctity of the confessional.

Abuse—whatever this means—has also provided an excuse for a frontal assault on celibacy. The last few years have witnessed a spate of books on the unpopularity of clerical celibacy, and it has been alleged that priests and religious respond to their inner conflicts in one of two ways: either they ignore the discipline by forming relationships with women or they become pedophiles. Recent books—quoted with glowing approval in the major newspapers—have suggested that anywhere up to half of all priests effectively ignore celibacy regulations. Such studies cannot fail to have an impact, and recent opinion polls suggest that the number of Catholics favoring married priests rose from 58 percent in 1983 to 70 percent in 1992. Those supporting the ordination of women priests grew in the same period from 40 percent to nearly 70 percent. These changes cannot be entirely attributed to the panic over child abuse, but the coincidence in timing is striking.

The question of child abuse has done much to subvert a series of fundamental Catholic institutions that had remained largely unchallenged since the Reformation. It is quite possible to imagine a Catholic Church with married clergy, with women priests, and without auricular confession, though many would question how far such a body could claim an authentic link to Catholic tradition. But such changes appear mild when compared with the intellectual and cultural revolution that is now threatened in the name of feminist theology, in which the theme of child abuse plays a fundamental role. Christian feminists have often been criticized for their ambition to create new systems oriented toward the worship of a nurturing goddess rather than a traditional Judeo-Christian deity. In the process, they have shown a disturbing willingness to synthesize practices and beliefs from other female-oriented religions (including New Age groups and "Wicca" witches). Creeping neopaganism has often used the issue of abuse as a means of self-justification, leading many activists to challenge virtually all of the basic concepts not merely of Catholicism, but of Christianity as such.

Christian churches have differed over many aspects of their faith, but the great majority have held fast to certain key notions: human sinfulness, the atonement, the sacrificial death of Christ, redemptive suffering, and the forgiveness of sins as the highest virtue. All of these ideas have been denounced by leading feminists like Mary Daly, Alice Miller, Matthew Fox, and Joanne Carlson Brown, precisely because these mainstream Christian notions represent what they term a "theology of abuse." In this view, guilt and a sense of sin represent the psychic scars of the primal rape and abuse suffered by the believer, while God becomes the ultimate abuser. *Episcopal Life* quoted a theorist who challenged the theology of the crucifixion: "To me, it is an abusive act of a father toward a child. The theology of sin in the church is all about human worthlessness." Absurd as it may seem, the Trinity becomes the celestial archetype of the dysfunctional family.

The essays in one of feminism's major texts—*Christianity, Patriarchy and Abuse*—repeatedly challenge Christian beliefs in this same vein. For example, "We do not need to be saved by Jesus' death from some original sin. We need to be liberated from the oppression of racism, classism and sexism, that is, from patriarchy. . . . Peace was not made by the Cross . . . suffering is never redemptive, and suffering cannot be redeemed." Furthermore, "As an aspect of trinitarian thought, Christology is often based on implicit elements of child abuse." Even forgiveness is prohibited in some instances, because the offense of child abuse is so immeasurably severe and because forgiving gets in the way of the "healing" of the alleged victim. Perhaps, after all these centuries, we have finally identified the mysterious "sin against the Holy Spirit," which cannot be forgiven? The Christian and specifically Catholic condemnation of sexual immorality is dismissed in these same pages as "theological pornography."

It is less than two decades since a "child abuse problem" was defined in this country. In that brief time, however, the problem—and the ideology based upon it—has gained such support that it has revolutionized our justice system and undermined our churches. The panic is in a sense a perfect weapon, because so few are prepared to question this orthodoxy and hence to challenge its practical consequences. Realizing this, liberals and feminists have used the abuse ideology as a Trojan Horse to enter and to subvert many traditional institutions. In religion, the panic threatens to overthrow not merely the Catholic Church but much of the essence of Christianity itself. Child abuse might indeed be the greatest threat the Church has faced in centuries, but the danger comes less from the handful of pedophile clergy than from the cynical activists who are exploiting their misdeeds. ✠

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The Pilgrimage of Malcolm Muggeridge

by Sally S. Wright

Anna Mycek-Wodecki

In the second segment of the several-part BBC documentary on his life, Malcolm Muggeridge smoothed his white feathery hair away from his cherubic face, smiled cryptically, and said in his deep, rolling, gentle English voice, "There's nothing in this world more instinctively abhorrent to me than finding myself in agreement with my fellow humans." And certainly, for 65 years, he prodded, provoked, amused, and altered British consciousness as a journalist, author, and television commentator who mocked the posturings of modern life. From the time he was a little child, he wanted to work with words, and he was best known for his wit and satire, for lines like, "If Hitler had treated dogs the way he treated the Jews, the British people would have clamored for war two years earlier." Yet he was more than a social critic and irreverent humorist who pinpointed the pitfalls of human institutions. By the time he died in November 1990, Malcolm Muggeridge had become the most widely read Christian apologist since C. S. Lewis—much to the disgust of his peers in the press, who had been irritated with him since he first rejected his family faith.

For Malcolm had been raised to be a Socialist activist by a quixotic father he dearly loved. And as a fourteen-year-old boy, in 1917, Malcolm was so taken with the Russian Revolution he decided he would one day move to Russia. In 1932, he was sent there as a correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian*, and there he and his wife, Kitty, planned to renounce their British citizenship and to take up residence in the "peoples' paradise."

What he saw of censorship and oppression in Stalin's regime, however, depressed him. And he grew to hate the Soviet system, especially after slipping Moscow security (unlike any other Western correspondent at the time) and traveling by train through the Ukraine and the Caucasus. There, while American and British journalists in and out of Russia wrote about the startling agricultural success of Soviet communism, Muggeridge saw the barren land, the deserted villages, the peasants with hollow eyes and emaciated bodies, "their hands tied behind their backs, being driven into cattle trucks at gun point," as forced collectivization (using the Red Army backed by air cover) slaughtered ten million Ukrainians and destroyed the breadbasket of Russia. There Muggeridge also saw religious persecution (orders disbanded, their possessions stolen, many of their priests shot). He wrote about such things in three articles on the Ukraine and the Caucasus, which he smuggled out in diplomatic pouches. The leftist *Guardian* reluctantly printed them, though they censored the articles and criticized Muggeridge, prompting him to resign. When he returned to England, he found himself attacked in one periodical after another for "lying" about Stalinist Russia. In the next few years, he could hardly find a publisher for his work.

Adversity is usually the way spiritual lessons are taught, and Muggeridge was paying attention. He had learned in the Soviet Union that heaven will never be built on earth, that no human system can provide justice and peace and plenty, and that mankind will not grow better and finer on its own. Muggeridge saw that it is our *values*, not our production processes and social arrangements, that make life bearable or worth living. For he had watched his wife on the verge of death by typhoid in the Soviet Union, and he had seen starving peasants in a church in Kiev worshiping with faces "transformed by suffering," which spoke to him of something greater than bread or starvation. He had also seen, by 1936, the in-

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Sally S. Wright writes from Bowling Green, Ohio.

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evitability of World War II, and he spent the whole war in intelligence. He was given the Legion of Honor, the Croix de Guerre, and several British decorations (though he maintained that "the two most ridiculous activities I've ever been engaged in have been war and sex").

In the 1950's, he wrote from all over the world, edited *Punch*, and took up a career as a radio and television interviewer, becoming England's most widely recognized personality after the Royal Family. He had gotten to know, or to at least interview, Gandhi, Churchill, Montgomery, Macmillan, De Gaulle, Truman, MacArthur, Kim Philby, Nehru, Ben-Gurion, Orwell, Wodehouse, Greene, and Waugh (and later Solzhenitsyn)—and was therefore well placed to comment on the 20th century. He could publish wherever he liked. He had a wife and four children he deeply loved. And yet, by the 60's, he was far from happy. He suffered from chronic insomnia, was dabbling in adultery, and was drinking entirely too much.

He then found himself doing a television interview with Mother Teresa (whom no one had ever heard of). He was so impressed by her that he decided to do a documentary on her, as well as a book, and to donate the proceeds to her work. He did another documentary on an Anglican abbey in Scotland, living with the monks for three weeks and sharing their life. For he had always been interested in religion. As a child, he "knew" that worldly things—money and fame and success and sensuality—ultimately "weren't any good," even when he wanted them, and he "knew" (though how, he never understood, since he was raised in an agnostic family) that the New Testament "held the key to how to live," that it was the "only light in a dark world," and that "Jesus was God or he was nothing." While at Cambridge, he had lived in an Anglican residential house for a term, where he enjoyed the simplicity and asceticism. In fact, his closest lifelong friend was a celibate Anglican priest. He was moved by the devotion he had seen in that church in Kiev, as well as among missionaries in India and Africa. His concept of love came not from any sexual event, but from a time when Kitty lay dying after an operation and he lay next to her, his blood being pumped directly into hers, so that as life flowed back into her face, "for the first time" he "truly understood what love meant."

But it was not until 1967, when he was working on a documentary in the Holy Land, that he began to call himself a Christian. He was in Bethlehem in the crypt of the Church of the Nativity, waiting for the public to leave so that he could begin to shoot, and he was sitting on a stone ledge, in a shadow cast by candles, thinking how ridiculous the so-called shrines of the Holy Land were. The commercialism was positively repulsive, and he could not help asking himself what kind of idiot could really believe that this place marked with a silver star was the precise spot where Jesus had been born. The Holy Land, in his opinion, had been turned into a kind of Jesusland with a string of "ecclesiastical junk shops." Malcolm then noticed the visitors coming into the crypt. Some of them crossed themselves and others knelt, but most of them seemed to see the Church of the Nativity as one more stop on a sightseeing tour like Madame Tussaud's Waxworks.

Yet as Malcolm watched, each face was "transfigured" by the experience of beholding what was supposedly the place of Jesus' birth. The boredom and the idle curiosity fell away. Watching those faces, Malcolm Muggeridge suddenly "became aware that there really had been a man, Jesus, who was also God." And then he "became conscious of His presence."

In *Jesus Rediscovered* (which has sold hundreds of thousands of copies) Muggeridge wrote:

> I may, I suppose, regard myself, or pass for being, a relatively successful man. People occasionally stare at me in the streets—that's fame. I can fairly easily earn enough to qualify for admission to the higher slopes of the Internal Revenue—that's success. Furnished with money and a little fame even the elderly, if they care to, may partake of trendy diversions—that's pleasure. It might happen once in a while that something I said or wrote was sufficiently heeded for me to persuade myself that it represented a serious impact on our time—that's fulfillment. Yet I say to you—and I beg you to believe me—multiply these tiny triumphs by a million, add them all together, and they are nothing—less than nothing, a positive impediment—measured against one draught of that living water Christ offers to the spiritually thirsty, irrespective of who or what they are.

For the rest of his life, Malcolm Muggeridge would write about little else besides Christianity, though he also began fighting abortion (which he saw as the thin edge of the wedge that would lead to euthanasia and the liquidation of the elderly as soon as they became inconvenient), thereby infuriating journalists and intellectuals across the globe.

In the 1930's, they called him a liar. In the 70's, they said he was senile, a wit who had turned witless overnight. Malcolm Muggeridge was many things, but witless was not one of them. This was a man, who, in casual conversation or when questioned live on TV, would say things like: "Americans are the only people who've become decadent without ever being civilized." "The only candidate I ever wanted to vote for was a man who based his appeal on the fact that, having been confined in a lunatic asylum, he had a certificate of sanity." "In my lifetime, Britain has given away India, Australia and everything we had in Africa—and there we gave it to one tin pot dictator after another whose motto was always 'One man, one vote, *once*!' And now we've gone to war over two rock outcroppings [the Falkland Islands] off the coast of Venezuela!" "I've had my aerials removed. It's the moral equivalent of having a prostate operation . . . I'm willing to appear on TV, but not to own one."

Malcolm once said that real humor comes from the difference between what humans aspire to and what they achieve and that this is why most jokes are about sex. He, of course, never told jokes. He ordered his life with wit, choosing to see the humor in whatever circumstances he faced. When he was rector of the University of Edinburgh and a Catholic chaplain said it was "monstrous" of Muggeridge to oppose the university's decision to give in to student demands and provide free contraceptives "because he was assuming they intended to be promiscuous," Malcolm wrote and asked "What the Reverend Father thought they wanted the contraceptives for—to save up for their wedding day?"

What people seem to remember most about Muggeridge is laughing uncontrollably when they were with him. Several of his friends say they actually used to laugh so hard they had to grab a tree, or a fence post, or a chair to hold

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themselves upright. Yet, his most important trait was that he really wanted to know the truth and that he said and wrote what he believed it to be regardless of whether it was popular. The fact that he was a freelance writer all his life, with no Social Security or pension, made that even more remarkable, because the danger of freelancing is that you are a hired pen and can be pressured to write what the check-signer wants to hear. Malcolm never did that. He regularly bit the hand that fed him. He expressed his opinions calmly and politely, and no form of adulation or criticism deterred him. In the 1960's he asked Dr. Christiaan Barnard, for example, on a live TV show, if the first heart transplant was done in South Africa "because the equipment and the surgeons were better than anywhere else in the world, or because after many years of the vile doctrine of apartheid, you've come to think of people as something other than human beings with souls?" He thereby became the only person known to have his passport revoked by both the Soviet Union *and* South Africa. He also earned a death sentence from the Anti-Jewish Pogrom Committee of the People's Liberation Army—which he totally ignored—for his criticism of anti-Semitism.

He had enemies on the left because he refused to overlook the way our Western intelligentsia has admired and whitewashed every communist regime from Russia to Nicaragua, but he also had enemies on the right because he was not enamored of capitalism. He saw it as the least dangerous form of economic order but ridiculous in many of its manifestations. He thought that the English monarchy and aristocracy were silly and self-serving and that the pomposity of the British was extraordinary. He therefore made fun of them, just as he made fun of the culturelessness of Americans, ruffling feathers and inflaming tempers on both sides of the Atlantic.

Perhaps the only issue his admirers and critics have ever agreed upon is that his two-volume autobiography, *Chronicles of Wasted Time*, is among the finest ever written in the English language. Here, as in all his writing, he mocked the absurdities of modern life, but in doing so he was putting this century in perspective, showing us that ours is an age like any age, with blind spots and stupidities and horrors.

Yet to look at Malcolm Muggeridge in the last twenty years of his life (when he and Kitty lived in the gentle hills of East Sussex in a steep tile-roofed, white stone farm cottage that looked like it had grown out of the ground on its own), no one would have suspected him of being controversial. He had a kindly, serene, wisely childlike face that was remarkably fluid, flexible, and expressive.

Malcolm's lifelong favorite pastime was walking, and even in his 80's he would start off past his chicken house and his bee hives and walk for hours through pine woods and apple orchards and soft green hills, salted with sheep. He wore the same split-pea-soup-colored corduroy jacket virtually every day of his life. He and Kitty always ate homemade bread with eggs and cheese and fruit, sitting in the kitchen at their comfortably worn wooden table. All their furniture was old and well-used. For in spite of the traveling and the fame, Malcolm never cared about material things. He and Kitty raised four children in very straitened circumstances, yet he still gave what he could not afford to give to friends he saw in need. When he read in the paper that his first girlfriend (who was then far from young and completely on her own) had been swindled out of her savings, Malcolm anonymously arranged for her to receive the same amount. When an anti-abortion group in Canada invited him to speak at a rally but then found they could not pay his travel expenses or rent the hall, Malcolm paid for it all himself. He gave the proceeds from his Christian books to Christian charities and gave away everything else before he died. For Malcolm became more charitable, in every sense of the word, after he became a Christian. He had come to see that "humility is not just the most important virtue, but the condition of all virtue" and had begun to expect more from himself.

In his last years, he could not bear to watch his early television appearances because he saw his own arrogance so clearly, and when strangers stopped him on the street, he went out of his way to be kind. When various "disciples" appeared at his door, just as they had at Tolstoy's, Malcolm would give them tea and a surprising amount of his time. Even when an inmate from a mental institution, who claimed to be Jesus Christ, walked sixty miles to see Muggeridge, Malcolm took him in—later explaining to Ian Hunter, his long-time friend and biographer, that he had thought to himself, "'What if he is Jesus Christ?' I would have missed Jesus the first time. I wouldn't have been watching at the cross. I would've been covering Pilate, asking who he was sleeping with, or something else equally absurd. And I didn't want to miss Him again."

Malcolm wanted to be on good terms with everyone he knew before he died, and he set out to smooth whatever hard feelings he might have caused. When faced with the choice of seeing Niagara Falls with friends or going to lunch at Wendy's at the invitation of his grandsons, Malcolm chose Wendy's (even though he was a vegetarian and there was little he disliked more than the commercial tackiness of the modern world).

Still, as Malcolm grew older, it became important to him to decide whether he would die inside or outside the Church. He had never attached himself to any institution before, and he had attacked them all from afar. Although he remained convinced to the end that the organizations and structures of the Christian church are doomed (along with the civilization Christianity created), he and Kitty became Roman Catholics in 1982.

Malcolm had several small strokes in his last two years, though he did not seem to be suffering. Actually, suffering did not bother Malcolm. He said many times throughout his life that suffering was the only thing that had ever taught him anything, that no catastrophe occurs that is not also an illumination, and that we never would have even heard of Christ if it had not been for the Cross. Nor was he afraid of death. He had joked about it for years and often said he was looking forward to crawling out of his decaying husk and making off into eternity. But the one fear he did have was that Kitty would die first and that he would not be able to bear it. Fortunately for him, he was spared the experience.

In 1990, at the age of 87, Malcolm suffered the frustration and indignity of a terrible stroke. But even that did not keep him from resisting authority. He absolutely refused to take any medication, and no nurse, or combination of nurses, was able to force any into him. His son John was with him near the end. He and Kitty brought a priest to see him, though they did so with trepidation. They were afraid he would refuse to take Communion, thinking it was another ruse to get him to swallow his pills. But after examining the priest with extremely suspicious eyes, and inspecting the wafer with great punctiliousness from every conceivable angle, Malcolm Muggeridge opened his mouth and smiled.

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At Arm's Length

by William Wilson

"I never had the opportunity of searching out God. He sought me out. He stalked me like a redskin, took careful aim and fired."
—C.S. Lewis

Anna Mycek-Wodecki

All My Road Before Me: The Diary of C.S. Lewis, 1922-1927
Edited by Walter Hooper; Foreword by Owen Barfield
New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; 508 pp., $22.95

Word and Story in C.S. Lewis
Edited by Peter J. Schakel and Charles A. Huttar
Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press; 316 pp., $37.50

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The disgruntled professor who equates academic integrity with paucity of book sales and who is thereby convinced that the masses who follow the writings of C. S. Lewis must be a cult of sorts, will take a perverse delight in the publication of his journal. And after reading it even the firmest disciple will have to admit that almost all of the 450 pages of entries are a repetitive chronicle of his daily round, replete with recordings of the weather and accounts of friends and companions now lost to the ages. He will have to admit, that is, that the diary was published with the clear expectation that Lewis's readers are interested first in the man and his writing only secondarily. Along the way one can find (as introduction, flyleaf, and preface promise) what a great writer's diary ought to give—signs of development, surmises that will one day be published convictions, sudden revelations of thought, etc.—but they are never in the foreground, and by the end of the book the reader has had no hint of how in these early years Lewis was making himself into a writer who would change the hearts and minds and faith of millions.

The journal is finally profitable for what it does not say. These were the years that Lewis, later in life, would refer to as his period of "hotheaded atheism"; the diary brings us almost to the brink of the sudden and dramatic conversion he recounted in his celebrated autobiography, *Surprised by Joy*. But we witness no hotheaded atheism at all in the journal, no antagonistic fun poked at believing friends, no jumping on Russell's, Freud's, or Nietzsche's bandwagon: the man we see is very much like the man we know. He recounts with rare pleasure his nature walks; he relishes conversation, tea, thick books, and baths. He befriends the plodder, is openly dismissive of the demagogue, and is amused by all the chatty dons at Oxford. More importantly, he holds the world at arm's length, as the Christian Lewis was to do. Tolkien he greatly admires, although he "needs a few good slaps." Much of Dickens is overrated, and Dryden is entirely a "rum thing." Christianity is simply one of the many options he holds at bay. Lewis will take his turn reading the lesson at chapel, but with some reluctance; he will attend Mass with his father mainly for the sake of family harmony.

William Wilson is the assistant dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and a member of the religious studies department at the University of Virginia.

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Though he held his atheism with complete conviction, Lewis-the-youthful-persecutor-of-Christians seems to be entirely a creation of his later years. His heathenism was a rhetorical ploy to put a human face on his uncompromising and unconditional apologetics. As his friend and confessor, Austin Farrer, was later to say, the persona Lewis as author chose for himself invited the reader to "look and see that such a man as I am can become an orthodox Christian." Thus he made himself not only the rhetorical enemy of Christ, but the actual enemy as well.

We must abandon the Damascan road drama that has become so indissolubly attached to Lewis's name. Those who berate him really cannot claim the intellectual turncoat who gave up on the grim new world rigor of modern atheism in order to speak comfortably to the masses; and those who love him cannot prove the wizard of dialectics who with sheer force of logic brought the toughest Babylonian to his knees.

The essays collected by Schakel and Huttar are a good indication of the high level of discussion achievable once both political correctness and hagiography are dismissed. Their title could not have been better chosen: word and story, philology and literature—these were Lewis's towering strengths. But the collection demonstrates this fact by examining his work not only in these fields —whether the Narnia sagas or the (ageless) studies in medieval and Renaissance literature, the novels or the *Studies in Words*—but in his Christian apologetics, where Lewis also employed the tools of the literary artist and scholar. Far from being a mere logic chopper, Lewis defended his faith in the explicitly theological writings by resurrecting ancient meanings and by distilling ancient stories. He once reminded an audience of fledgling priests that when they used the word "dogma" the connotation for most of their congregation would be "an unproved assertion delivered in an arrogant manner." This was his method in a nutshell. *The Abolition of Man* reconverted multitudes to traditional morality by exposing the ideology of high school English textbooks; his history of the word "world" incorporates some of his finest theology; and he went to war against Hume largely by analyzing a myth.

None of this detracts in any way from the power of his arguments. It is to say that he was far more interested in shedding light on the world than in the endless tit-for-tat of philosophical debate. Indeed, and as he would be the first to remind us, the verb "to demonstrate" in its Latin root means "to point out clearly" and therefore has far more to do with "shedding light" than it does with the forcing of assent by unanswerable argument. Thus, he chose signposts—metaphors, allegories, narratives—to circumscribe the majesty of God, bringing Him to bear upon our late and confused modernity with the clarity of good writing and the correct use of words.

But if the diary dismisses a persona it also confirms a fact, one for which the vilifiers would trade the persona without hesitation. To the dismay of Lewis's admirers, his biographers have persisted in stating that up until the time he won a faculty fellowship and moved into his permanent rooms at Magdalen College, he had a live-in love affair with a woman twice his age. To make matters worse, the woman was the mother of a close friend whom Lewis had promised to care for should the son not return (as he did not) from the First World War.

What of it? He did not then believe, and he would neither ape the forms of matrimony nor sow his wild oats (he was faithful to her throughout) before "settling down." The diary makes it clear that after moving on to Magdalen he visited his former lover every day and was her sole provider in her final years. When he did find a world to embrace—or rather when it embraced him—he acted again in complete disregard of conventions: he married late in life a woman with a terminal cancer and loved her to the end.

LIBERAL ARTS

TO WORMWOOD

"Your man has been accustomed, ever since he was a boy, to having a dozen incompatible philosophies dancing about together inside his head. He doesn't think of doctrines as primarily 'true' or 'false,' but as 'academic' or 'practical,' 'outworn' or 'contemporary,' 'conventional' or 'ruthless.' Jargon, not argument, is your best ally in keeping him from the Church. Don't waste time trying to make him think that materialism is *true*! Make him think it is strong or stark or courageous—that it is the philosophy of the future. That's the sort of thing he cares about."

"The attitude which you want to guard against is that in which temporal affairs are treated primarily as material for obedience. Once you have made the World an end, and faith a means, you have almost won your man, and it makes very little difference what kind of worldly end he is pursuing. Provided that meetings, pamphlets, policies, movements, causes, and crusades, matter more to him than prayers and sacraments and charity, he is ours—and the more 'religious' (on those terms), the more securely ours. I could show you a pretty cageful down here."

"The man who truly and disinterestedly enjoys any one thing in the world, for its own sake, and without caring twopence what other people say about it, is by that very fact forearmed against some of our subtlest modes of attack. You should always try to make the patient abandon the people or food or books he really likes in favour of the 'best' people, the 'right' food, the 'important' books. I have known a human defended from strong temptations to social ambition by a still stronger taste for tripe and onions."

—*from* The Screwtape Letters *by C.S. Lewis.*

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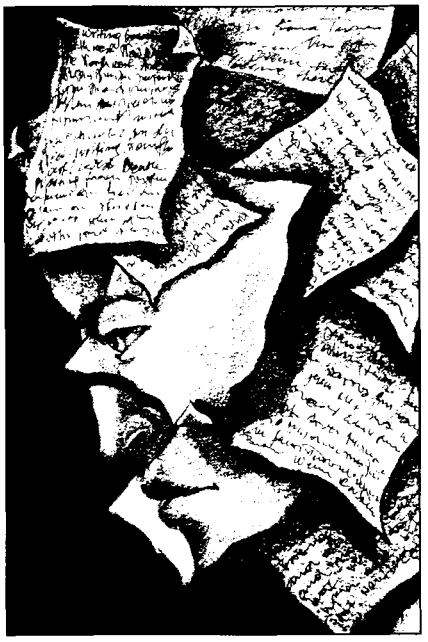
New Writing From the Northwest

by Gregory McNamee

"Every kind of writing is good save that which bores."
—Voltaire



Anna Mycek-Wodecki

Sailor Song
by Ken Kesey
New York: Viking; 533 pp., $23.50

Young Men and Fire
by Norman Maclean
Chicago: University of Chicago Press; 288 pp., $19.95

Nothing But Blue Skies
by Thomas McGuane
New York: Seymour Lawrence Houghton Mifflin; 349 pp., $21.95

◆

The Pacific Northwest of the United States, embracing Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and western Montana, has long been a major source of agricultural and mineral wealth. For generations it has also served as a center for the fine arts, but only recently has it done the same for literature. Since the end of the Second World War, when the region experienced rapid growth, a loosely allied group of writers have claimed the Northwest's places as their own. The most visible of them have been natives Richard Hugo, William Stafford, William Kittredge, Norman Maclean, Ken Kesey, Raymond Carver, Ivan Doig, and James Welch, along with transplants like Annick Smith, Rick Bass, and Thomas McGuane.

These writers have collectively produced a large shelf of books in the last two decades at, or so it seems, an ever-quickening pace. Bass, for instance, an accomplished young writer, is working simultaneously on 18 books, surely a record for ambition. Soon after the publication of his monumental anthology of literature about Montana, *The Last Best Place*, William Kittredge completed his newly released memoir *Hole in the Sky*, which seems destined to become a standard. Each season brings new offerings from the flourishing Northwestern states—which as recently as a decade ago were considered, in the words of journalist Joel Garreau, "the empty quarter." The fall of 1992 boasts three of special interest: Ken Kesey's long-awaited novel *Sailor Song*, Norman Maclean's *Young Men and Fire*, and Thomas McGuane's *Nothing But Blue Skies*.

Ken Kesey, a native of Oregon, achieved notoriety three decades ago as the leader of the so-called Merry Pranksters, drug-devouring free spirits who prefigured the rise of hippiedom in all its glories and excesses. Before diving into the counterculture, however, Kesey had published two astonishingly strong novels, *Sometimes a Great Notion* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, both of which remain classics of postwar American fiction. Sidetracked by LSD and self-absorption, Kesey failed to follow up on that early promise, and his writing has been only marginal for thirty years. His sprawling new novel concerns a Pacific Coast town full of old hippies who have been stewing over the rape of the environment and the collapse of constitutional virtues. They decide to strike back, and Kesey's story wends its leisurely way to a sort of goofy apocalyptic ending.

The book aches with nostalgia for the 1960's. Its epigraph is taken from a lyric by Leonard Cohen, the poet of gloom and doom; the novel's resident rock band is called the Dreadful Great, a transparent twist on the group that provided atmosphere for Kesey's legendary LSD fiestas of three decades past; its characters sport weird hippie names like Louise Loop, Billy Bellisaurius, Alice the

Gregory McNamee is the author of Christ on the Mount of Olives *(Broken Moon Press), a book of short stories.*

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Angry Aleut, and Greer the Viking Rastafarian ("I be a Viking from Bimini, by yumpin' yiminy"). But *Sailor Song* eludes pure anachronism by tackling matters of immediate concern. Set in a small Alaska town called Kuniak at the turn of the next millennium among forests "choked by thick air, cooked and confused by the Anarchy of the Age," it raises the green flag of ecology at every turn. The earth then is in even sorrier shape than it is today. "From Alaska there's no place left to go," its protagonist notes. "There was Brazil, but they cut it down to pay their Third World debt to the First and Second, who fed it to McDonald's. Over ten zillion sold."

"They," of course, are the shadowy captains of industry and government, cartoon figures where they enter at all in Kesey's narrative. They appear largely in the corpulent form of a Sydney Greenstreet-like Hollywood tycoon called Gerhardt Steubins, whose production company invades unsuspecting Kuniak to film an extravaganza called *The Seal*—in real life a children's story Kesey published not long ago—complete with sex, violence, high-tech special effects, and a legion of sea mammals. The story might have benefited from sporting a more believable villain, but Kesey is after all a Prankster.

Ike Sallas, Kesey's hero, does not take kindly to the invading let's-do-lunch horde from the South. "A decorated veteran railing against the same flag that had awarded him the Navy Cross," he has emigrated to the Alaskan woods to stake out a bit of *fin-de-siècle* paradise and is prepared to go to war to protect it. The movie industry has ruined more than one town, he reasons, and Kuniak is ripe for the plucking. Never mind that it seems to have been plucked enough already. Kesey portrays the town as something of a countercultural Disneyland, full of rock bands, skyplanes that spell out the name of Japanese commodities, a rising generation of carefree youth "nimble as lizards in their black leather briefs," and all the requisite drugs.

You would think a dose of Hollywood would be mere icing on the cake for such a place, and Sallas even catches himself thinking that "maybe they *were* going to cut the whole town in on the action, make everybody rich and famous." Movie types call this a continuity problem; for maximum effect, Kuniak really ought to be an unspoiled Eden, like the Scottish village in Bill Forsyth's film *Local Hero*. Whatever the case, Sallas takes up a monkey-wrench—his Backatcha Movement is clearly modeled on the real-life Earth First! ecosabotage cause—and sets out to save Kuniak from itself. (Naturally enough, everything is done by committee in his politically correct time, but Ike is a lone wolf.) He does so by temporarily removing mogul Gerhardt Steubins from the scene, unaware that a legion of assistant directors and wardrobe specialists and focus-pullers will roll right along without the boss, determined to come in on schedule and under budget.

The plot of *Sailor Song* lends itself everywhere to slapstick and buffoonery (imagine the result if Kurt Vonnegut had taken it on), but Kesey mostly steers clear of cheap tricks even when striving for laughs. To be sure, he tosses off plenty of "in" jokes: Nicholas Levertov, Steubins' chief toady, and a singularly unctuous one at that, shares his name with Beat poet Denise Levertov (why is anyone's guess); assistant director Leonard Smalls is the namesake of the biker villain of Joel and Ethan Coen's cult film *Raising Arizona*; and the village priest, Father Pribilof, takes *his* surname from that of the great Russian explorer of Alaska, Gerasim Pribilof. Kesey indulges himself in all this, and it seems a wasted enterprise.

In the end good prevails, as in all of Kesey's works. But it wins out in a way just twisted enough to keep the reader entangled. The novel is candy, not solid sustenance. Still, Kesey is incapable of writing a bad sentence, and a little candy between meals won't kill you.

On August 5, 1949, lightning came crashing down in the vast spruce forest above Seeley Lake, Montana, touching off a roaring blaze. Now every Westerner knows that lightning means fire, but the fire that raged through Mann Gulch, Montana, that morning was unlike most others. For one, it grew huge, the sort of conflagration that occurs only every few decades. For another, a battery of paratrooper-firefighters, many of them fresh veterans of the Second World War, had been anticipating it. They thrived on fire, on the thrill of confronting and extinguishing it, and as they sprang into action they bore their pride openly, as crack soldiers will. Before the day ended, 13 of these "smokejumpers" lay dead, their charred remains evidence that something had gone terribly wrong.

Montana-bred Norman Maclean, the celebrated author of *A River Runs Through It*—recently made into a film under the direction of Robert Redford—saw his share of fires as a teenager, when he battled in place of men sent off to Europe during World War I. When news of the Mann Gulch fire and its terrible toll spread across the nation, Maclean was teaching English literature at the University of Chicago, well embarked upon a career as one of the foremost Shakespearean scholars of his day. The tragedy haunted him, and when he retired from teaching in 1973 he turned to his yellowing files and fading memories and sat down to write the story that would become *Young Men and Fire*. His initial thoughts lay in the horror of dying by fire. At the beginning of his tale he dwells at length on that horror, and the result is not reading for the squeamish:

> As a fire on a hillside closes in, everything becomes a mode of exhaustion—fear, thirst, terror, a twitch in the flesh that still has a preference to live, all become simple exhaustion. So upon closer examination, burning to death on a mountainside is dying at least three times . . . first, considerably ahead of the fire, you reach the verge of death in your boots and your legs; next, as you fail, you sink back in the region of strange gases and red and blue darts where there is no oxygen and here you die in your lungs; then you sink in prayer into the main fire that consumes.

The young men died, Maclean argues, for a number of reasons, none defensible. First, the "escape fire"—a counterblaze that turns an approaching fire to one side or another—that their supervisor ordered them to build was ineffective. Second, explaining the first, the smokejumpers had received only three weeks of training under the tutelage of the United States Forest Service. Third, and most damning, bureaucratic infighting and ineptitude led to many instances of miscommunication: where the firefighters should have approached the fire by a side canyon, they were ordered to advance straight up a hillside leading to Mann Gulch. The fire racing downhill caught them before they could

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act to save themselves. Maclean tracked down a few of the forest rangers who sent these men to their doom. Many of them retained scars of their terrible culpability; others, professional desk jockeys, maintained their innocence. Surviving firefighters were not so quick to forgive, and their hard words are hallmarks in Maclean's narrative.

As Maclean notes, the lessons of August 1949 did not go unlearned despite the Forest Service's efforts to cover up official malfeasance. Since the disaster, firefighters have received a rigorous course of instruction designed to avert others like it. The burial benefit to firefighters' heirs was also doubled to a whopping $400. (There has been no need to claim it; no smokejumper has perished in the line of duty since the Mann Gulch debacle.) And the Forest Service began to understand that not all fires need to be fought, that fire tends to benefit most ecosystems by clearing dead undergrowth and fertilizing soil with ash. For that reason, the Mann Gulch-sized blazes that swept across Yellowstone National Park in 1989 were allowed to rage on, and today the area is as lush as ever.

When Maclean died in 1990, his manuscript lay unfinished. It was up to the editors of the University of Chicago Press to cobble it together, divide the text into chapters, and silently complete a few of the author's thoughts. In the main they have done their job well. Maclean would have done better, and the present book is not quite up to the grace and power of *A River Runs Through It*, a masterpiece of contemporary prose and perhaps the single book that best captures the spirit of the Northwest. But for all that, *Young Men and Fire* offers a riveting detective story and stands as a fitting testimonial to those 13 brave men who died needlessly in the woods of Montana 43 years ago.

Thomas McGuane has consciously carved out a niche in American literary history as our contemporary Hemingway, even by tracing the old man's footsteps from place to place. In the 1960's and 70's McGuane was associated with Key West, where he kept a house and produced his earliest novels. He had a reputation as a hellraiser then, seeking to match his distinguished literary ancestor drink for drink and spouse for spouse. But twenty years have passed, and McGuane has mellowed. He now lives on a ranch in the Paradise Valley of Western Montana, where he devotes his time to raising cattle, reading, and writing. Now a mature man in his mid-50's, McGuane has abandoned most of his youthful pursuits, and his *roman à clef*, *Nothing But Blue Skies*, shows it.

Frank Copenhaver, the lonely hero—or antihero—of this novel is a sorry sight to behold. He is lost on that great sea of grass verging on Montana's western mountains, near Livingston, where his creator just happens to live. Montana may be the very definition of wide-open spaces, but for Frank Copenhaver its vastness more and more resembles a prison with each passing day.

Copenhaver's world is unraveling before his eyes. His marriage of many years is imploding; as the novel opens his wife, who runs a Cajun restaurant called Amazing Grease, is preparing to leave him for parts unknown. He is well in his 50's, and the years aren't treating him well. His neohippie daughter is dating a man his own age. He has taken to driving down back roads screaming, "My empire is falling!" and has lost connection with the world. A lover of fishing and wilderness, like any true Montanan, Copenhaver spends his days and nights indoors, making business deals, sending faxes, and poring over the *Wall Street Journal*. All for naught because—of course—his contracting business is falling to pieces along with the rest of his universe. How Copenhaver extricates himself from the mess he has made of his life is the meat of McGuane's story. A fully fleshed, believable character, he makes a botch of nearly every attempt, as we all do. He picks barroom fights with big cowboys, taunts local politicians with cries of "fascist," and generally does things just the way he knows he should not. By twists and turns McGuane allows Copenhaver to grope his way to something approaching a happy ending, but not without major pratfalls.

Nothing But Blue Skies is appealing on any number of fronts—certainly more so than the dismal *Something to Be Desired*, published in 1984. An especially fine touch is McGuane's respectful treatment of his women characters, another welcome sign of maturity. Copenhaver's wife Gracie is thoroughly likable, and he shows no rancor toward her for having abandoned him. He has plenty of likable women friends as well, true friends and not mere objects of desire. The most intellectually attractive of them, June, isn't at all "astonished to find out that life was a fight," as the narrator observes. "So her feistiness lacked the indignation, the bruised quality, that gave relationships between men and women these days their peculiar smelliness."

Unlike his early novels (*Panama*, *The Sporting Club*, and *Ninety-two in the Shade*), McGuane's new novel is no *tour de force*. *Nothing But Blue Skies* is, however, a well-considered study of a man confronting a mid-life crisis and, in the end, overcoming it by sheer force of will. (In that regard it beats Robert Bly's weepy *Iron John* by a long shot. Frank Copenhaver despises pop-psych solutions, remarking "I'm much too old for that sort of thing. The messages of my formative years all came from Little Richard, who never soiled himself with an inner journey.")

Ironic, precise, and in full command of his language, McGuane delivers sharp observations on our deteriorating world. Along with Ken Kesey, who takes a slapstick view of the future, and Norman Maclean, who casts a cold eye on the past, he is helping to elevate the literature of the Pacific Northwest to national prominence.

LIBERAL ARTS

TOUCHÉ

"The August 19 'Family Values'-fest at the Republican convention almost left me comatose. . . . I was concerned that the tenor of the meeting had cast an ominous shadow on the possibility that any non-traditional 'family' ever had a chance of living a happy, safe or 'decent' life here in the U. S. A.

"Just as my despair began to mount, the music from the band swelled dramatically. What? Could this familiar tune be what I thought it was? No! It couldn't be! But yes, yes it was! 'The Best of Times' from *La Cage aux Folles*! My faith in America had been renewed."

—from an August 26 letter by Kevin D. Kouba to the Courier-Journal *in Louisville, Kentucky.*

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Credit Socialism

by Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr.

Money of the Mind: Borrowing and Lending in America From the Civil War to Michael Milken
by James Grant
New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux; 512 pp., $25.00

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In May 1991, Risa Kugal, a fortyish New York woman who said she was unemployed and supported by her mother, appeared at court in Brooklyn. She was there, as James Grant tells us, to have $75,000 in credit card debt wiped off the books under Chapter Seven of the federal bankruptcy code. She owed $18,000 on five Citibank cards, more than $17,000 on three American Express cards, and smaller amounts on a host of accounts like Macy's. Her assets, she said, were $750.

The bankruptcy process is supposed to be long and arduous, but Judge Conrad B. Duberstein takes less than seven minutes, on average, to forgive the profligate and stick the federal government's thumb in their creditors' eyes. Kugal, unusually, was questioned on how exactly she had come to owe so much money on credit cards. "I used one to pay off another," she answered, and was promptly cleansed of her obligations. Another bankruptcy judge, Marvin Holland, hoped Kugal didn't feel bad. He announced: "I don't want anybody to leave this court feeling uncomfortable, guilty, or ashamed. You should walk out of here with your head held high. You should feel proud." This is a microcosm of America. Holland's message is sent by Washington, D. C., to all its clients, from welfare bums to S&L bandits. How have we come to this?

There are two official schools of thought on the 1980's: the left-Clintonian, which condemns the decade as one of greed and social Darwinism, and the *Wall Street Journal*-supply side, which praises it as the eschaton immanetized (Wall Street got rich, the masses got rhetoric, the government got bigger, and the neoconservatives got jobs). No one has yet told the true story of the age of Reagan (suggested title: *Betrayal*), but we do now have a revisionist, Old Right history of money and finance that rescues truth from the distorters.

James Grant is editor of *Grant's Interest Rate Observer*, the most influential (and sardonic) publication of its kind. For him, the 1980's were the years of easy money and credit socialism sold as conservatism. A paleolibertarian, Grant recognizes the essentially collectivist nature of the Reagan boom, fueled as it was by central bank credit expansion rather than tax cuts. Bankruptcy became a snap, and banks and "thrifts" made money making profligate loans the American people are now asked to repay. But credit socialism did not begin with Reagan, and Grant surveys money, borrowing, and lending from the National Banking Act of 1864 to the five-year loan on the Yugo, a car that doesn't last that long.

Money and banking have always been contentious areas of American policy. Among the Founders, the Jeffersonians favored hard money for reasons of limited government, the Hamiltonians inflation as part of their big-government program. (Although in fairness I should add that today's neocon makes Hamilton look like John Randolph of Roanoke.) From the Polk administration until Lincoln's war of centralization, we had the excellent Subtreasury system, under which government could not inflate and circulating money consisted of gold and silver coins. Banking was "free," meaning there were few restrictions on entry and each bank issued its own notes. Bankers—distrusted throughout most of American history—could issue more notes than they had specie on deposit, but without a national banking system, there could be no widespread business cycles (today's are possible only through government-contrived increases in bank credit). But Lincoln's depreciating greenbacks and income tax couldn't pay all the costs of attacking and pillaging the South, so the rump Congress passed the National Banking Act of 1864. Under it, certain banks were designated national and only they could issue bank notes, which had to be accepted at par by other national banks and by the Treasury, even if the issuer were insolvent. In return for this privilege, the national banks bought all of the Treasury bonds issued.

By 1879, the United States had worked itself back to a gold standard. "As the Constitution restricted the freedom of action of the Justice Department," says Grant, "so did the gold standard curb the activities of the Treasury. Bound by a legal definition of money, the government could not print its way out of a jam," nor could it "bribe the voters." This was not a satisfactory system to big debtors, however, who understood, says Grant, that "a debt is a promise to pay a sum of money. Cheapen that money, and the burden of debt becomes lighter."

Grover Cleveland opposed inflation. It would align, he said, the country "not with the enlightened nations of Christendom, but side by side with China, with the republic of Mexico, with the republics of Central and South America, and with every other semi-civilized country on the globe." But the banks wanted inflation and a cartelization of their industry, so that they could profit from expanding credit without fear of bank runs. And the government wanted more power. The result was the Federal Reserve System. The *Wall Street Journal* had pleaded with Congress "to give us what every other civilized country possesses, a central bank," and we got it.

When the Federal Reserve Act was signed on December 23, 1913, the United Cigar Stores Co. ran full-page ads hailing it as the equivalent of the Declaration of Independence. Panics, it assured Americans, had now "become effete." The Fed, added Representative Carter Glass of Virginia, is "an altruistic institution" and the key to permanent prosperity. Really a special interest institution, it has brought us nothing but trouble.

During World War I, the Fed created massive amounts of credit to fund the war, as it has done for other unnecessary wars. Since heavy inflation requires at least the unofficial abandonment of the gold standard, it became unpatriotic to use gold coins rather than paper money, or even to give a gold piece as a Christmas present. The Fed stopped the artificial boom in 1920 by ceasing to inflate (something it must always do eventually to avoid hyperinflation), causing a sharp, short depression. But then,

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to support Great Britain's impractical monetary policy, it created credit again, producing the boom that turned into the Great Depression, which in turn gave us Franklin D. Roosevelt, the New Deal, gold confiscation, the welfare state, and America's entry into World War II.

The final blow to sound money came on August 15, 1971, when Richard M. Nixon closed the "gold window" that had allowed foreign governments to redeem their dollars for gold. A check on central-bank discretion, this "window" was the last link to the rule of law in monetary affairs. Since then, the after-tax, after-inflation income of the average American family has fallen more than 19 percent. Said Leonid Brezhnev at the time, "We are now witnessing the beginning of the devaluation of the United States dollar," and "the possibility of a profound crisis of the capitalist system should not be excluded."

In this saga of monetary destruction, Grant's list of scoundrels is long. On his shorter list of heroes is John M. "One Hundred Percent" Nichols, president of the First National Bank of Englewood, Illinois. During the bank runs of 1933, Nichols had invited nervous depositors to withdraw their money, since—true to his nickname—his bank was 100 percent liquid, with a dollar in cash or readily marketable securities for every dollar on deposit. (Modern banks are inherently bankrupt and protected from default only by a federal safety net.) "One Hundred Percent" Nichols later called a press conference to write down publicly the value of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago stock he was obliged to hold. He was supposed to value it at $24,000, but said its real worth was ten cents. He also refused to pay any assessments to the new FDIC, calling it a "damnable piece of political trickery." In 1941, he closed his bank "for the duration of the Roosevelt-concocted emergency," a pledge he had made during the 1940 election, and, in 1943, he spent $10,000 to tear his headquarters building down rather than sell it, ordering the site covered with black soil for "an honorable burial." He felt that he could not be both a banker and an honest man under the new regime.

Another hero is Sewell Avery, head of Montgomery Ward and a self-made man on what used to be the American model. A member of the Old Right, he despised everything about the New Deal: higher taxes, deficit spending, the socialist National Recovery Administration, and Roosevelt himself. But most of all he hated the income tax, which he denounced, as *Fortune* noted, as "the work of Satan." When Roosevelt took over the Continental Illinois in 1933, using one of Herbert Hoover's proto-New Deal agencies, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, he installed the first head of the FDIC as president. Sewell Avery would have none of it and resigned from the board. During the Depression, Avery saved Montgomery Ward through a combination of entrepreneurial talent and fiscal conservatism. But fearing another depression after World War II, he refused to expand through debt. As a result, he lost market share to those companies that had their indebtedness wiped out by Federal Reserve inflation.

In 1944 Avery refused to sign a government-imposed union contract that would have resulted in the firing of nonunion workers, so Roosevelt seized the company. Avery refused to leave and was carried out of Ward's headquarters by two Army MPs. "He was actually picked up and carried out in his chair," said Attorney General Francis Biddle, at whom Avery had flung his worst insult, "You New Dealer!"

As Grant notes, "Avery awoke in the morning of postwar America on the wrong side of the bed." Business "faced not a standard deflation but a newfangled, state-sponsored inflation." Because the dollar would be depreciated, it would pay to borrow and to repay in cheaper money. Refusing to conform, Avery lasted until the 1950's, when the 80-year-old man lost a proxy fight to the young Louis E. Wolfson, who would go on to fame and fortune—and jail—in the new era.

Central banking is bad enough, but deposit insurance really wreaks havoc. Federal deposit insurance, the welfare measure that did so much to help bring on the 1980's, was first proposed in 1894 by banker Charles G. Dawes, a future Vice-President of the United States. It went nowhere, but in the Progressive Era some of the states followed Dawes' lead, starting with Oklahoma in 1908. Yet Oklahoma's plan folded in 1910 after a large bank failure, and none of the others were successful either.

Why? Because it is impossible to insure a bank, which is an entrepreneurial firm. Insurance can only succeed with a broad class of similar policyholders (homeowners, for example) whom companies know from actuarial tables will have only a certain number of fires, burglaries, etc., each year. Firms charge enough to cover these losses and make a profit. But one cannot buy insurance against, for example, the natural market uncertainties of the restaurant business, and, absent government intervention, no one will insure banks in this way. Deposit insurance, public or private, is a pipedream, and therefore right up the politician's alley.

In 1913, a version of the Dawes plan was introduced in Congress, but Senator John W. Weeks of Massachusetts helped to defeat it. By adopting such a system, he said, people would seek the highest return on their money without considering a bank's soundness. Deposit insurance would subsidize the riskiest banks at the expense of the sound. Instead, a person "should be taught to be solicitous for his own personal welfare by keeping his eyes open and his mind exercised to protect his personal interests." A "form of socialism" is no answer. But it was, as usual, a solution for Roosevelt, who in the frenetic beginning of his New Deal established the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (now going bust and creating a much bigger mess than the S&Ls).

It was, for example, the FDIC—combined with Reagan's deregulation of the insured S&Ls—that made "Monkeybrains" Patterson rich. In the early 1980's, Patterson, who earned his nickname in college, was head of a tiny shopping-center bank in Oklahoma City called Penn Square. There he was known for wearing Mickey Mouse ears, howling like a hound dog, and getting rich by making crazed oil patch loans and selling them to big banks like Continental Illinois. By the time Penn Square went under in 1982—not being one of the 12 banks that Reagan's Controller of the Currency called "too big to [be allowed to] fail"—Monkeybrains and his friends were rolling in dough and Penn Square had palmed off more than $1 billion worth of uncollectable loans on Continental Illinois.

When the news got out, there was a bank run on the Chicago institution. Not the old-fashioned sort, where worried customers line up at the door for their money (which is never there, given the nature of fractional-reserve banking), but an electronic run. Foreign cus-

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tomers with much more on deposit than the FDIC limit of $100,000 had their money wired to them in a few moments. To stop the run, the Reagan administration nationalized Continental Illinois, backing $100 million depositors with $10,000 taxpayers. Today, the bank is 80 percent owned by the Resolution Trust Corporation, one of thousands of socialist enterprises bequeathed to us by Reagan.

Reagan's deregulation also made possible the activities of Charles H. Keating Jr., antipornography crusader, owner of some of our finest politicians, and head of Lincoln Savings and Loan. Keating purchased his S&L with Michael Milken junk bonds in 1984 and used it for funneling federally insured deposits into risky securities and real estate. "I think we've hit the jackpot," a happy Reagan had said as he signed the deregulation legislation. And many did, at a cost of more than $500 billion to the taxpayer. Deregulation is an economic imperative in real industries, but not when it frees financial cowboys to roll the dice at taxpayer expense.

In addition to costing Americans $1 billion in insured losses, Keating also sold $200 million in uninsured Lincoln bonds to what a confidential sales memo described as their top prospects: "the meek, the weak, and the ignorant." "Keating had said he would sell the bonds to Mother Teresa," writes Grant, "although that was apparently not what the memo was driving at." The day before Keating was indicted for fraud, 79-year-old Martin Fowler bought $14,000 worth of the even-then worthless bonds. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, he planned to use the income to help care for his 40-year-old daughter who has Down's Syndrome.

The debt boom of the 1980's is over, although we are only beginning to see its consequences. But as Grant shows, the speculative frenzy didn't just happen. It was the result of a long process of the centralization of money and banking, the democratization of credit, and the socialization of risk. The *Wall Street Journal* denounces these views as "Victorian finance," but isn't that exactly what we need in such a financially promiscuous time? And who but a money crank or a Keynesian could agree with Andrew Stuttaford in *National Review* that Grant is to be faulted for opposing "expansion of credit" and "government assistance," which have made us "immeasurably richer"? Actually, they have made most of us poorer and much less free.

This is the most entertaining book of its kind. More than that, it is brilliant—and brilliantly written—history. Worth a Pulitzer but too right-wing to get it, *Money of the Mind* shows not only why we're in trouble, but why four thousand people pay $450 a year for James Grant's commentary. He's a national treasure.

Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr., is president of the Ludwig von Mises Institute in Auburn, Alabama.

The New Imperialism

by William R. Hawkins

Dispelling the Myth of Globalization: The Case for Regionalization
by Hazel J. Johnson
New York: Praeger; 176 pp., $42.95

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The terms "global economy" and "New World Order" have become part of the common litany that frames foreign policy discussions. Though the second term is often used in a mocking or ironic tone, the first has attained the status of a paradigm. Yet Hazel J. Johnson, a professor of finance at the University of Louisville, does not believe it is an accurate description of world trends. Instead of a "one world" utopia where goods and money flow without regard to national boundaries or politics, Johnson finds only pockets of growth organized around strong nation-states: a pattern of regional empires rather than universal harmony. The "Old World Order" persists, and in this slim but data-filled monograph she looks at each major geographical region in turn. She finds—not surprisingly—very large disparities; what is surprising in the current atmosphere is her frank discussion of what lies behind these differences.

Asia warrants the most attention. Japan greatly increased its share of the world's wealth in the 1980's, largely at the expense of the United States. "Japanese economic behavior fails on every front to qualify as 'global' . . . The country is strongly nationalistic with unmistakable tendencies towards imperialism," writes Johnson. "The Japanese are truly intent on building a new empire, based in Asia, with affiliated offices around the world."

Japan's trade surpluses with the United States have given Tokyo enormous financial reserves, which are being converted into ownership of productive assets and raw materials. Japan prefers to own its sources of imports, and Japanese firms are investing in energy development, mining, agriculture, and basic manufacturing throughout Asia. Production is aimed at American and European markets, while Asian resources are meant to substitute for more distant supplies. The strategic and highly valuable elements of industry, however, are kept in Japan—along with authority over them.

America's pullback from Asia opens new opportunities for Tokyo. The cheap labor and natural resources of the Philippines, for example, are attractive. Johnson believes that South Korea, despite its economic success, will not be able to finance reunification with North Korea without external help. If the United States is unable to fill this role, Japan will be Seoul's only option. She predicts "Japan will extract economic concessions from Korea the likes of which have not been seen since the peninsula was invaded at the turn of the century."

In the nascent Japanese empire, "the primary functions that the United States appears best suited for are basic manufacturing and expanding the sphere of Japanese farm and other land ownership." Japanese investments in the United States, as elsewhere, serve to expand Japan's own network. "Japanese manufacturing operations in the United States channel output through Japanese wholesale trading companies with transactions financed by Japanese banks." The multiplier effects of these investments are captured primarily by Japanese firms at the expense of their American competitors. Thus every new job "created" in a Japanese-owned factory in the United States costs the American economy two jobs in other sectors. Johnson does not hold out much hope for America to negotiate better arrangements with Japan. Any concessions the Japanese are prepared to make, they are saving for negotiations with a united Europe whose mercantilist tradition makes it a much

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tougher adversary than "free trading" Washington.

In contrast to the economic gains made by Japan and Asia in the 1980's, American growth has slowed dramatically since the mid-1970's. Aside from those employed in the export sector, real income among workers in the private sphere fell during the 1980's. Americans continued to live as if they were still in a medium-growth economy, financing the difference between dreams and reality with mountains of debt. But today Americans must either accept stagnation or adopt radical reforms that will put the country back on a faster track. Though the economy was sliding into a recession as Johnson wrote, her book is concerned with structural changes rather than cyclical ones. Yet it seems clear that any combination of "quick fix" recovery schemes, financed by more red ink and burdened with environmental regulations and mandated benefits for businesses, will keep the American economy derailed.

Johnson encourages the United States to integrate Latin America into its economic system as Japan is doing with Asia. She warns that without strong economic growth in Latin America "an unbearable immigration problem" will threaten America. Unfortunately, Latin America's misuse of past capital flows has left it with huge debts it cannot repay. During the 1980's, the region made debt payments of $518 billion but earned only $188 billion from trade surpluses. The rest was financed by new debt ($191 billion) and by domestic austerity measures ($139 billion) that further weakened the region.

Johnson proposes a mixture of write-offs and zero-coupon refinancing. She also suggests supervision by a consortium of banks to insure that future investments go to productive uses. Her plan, however, depends on the United States getting its own house in order first. If the United States cannot abandon the pernicious trade and fiscal policies that prevent it from generating enough capital for its own development, it can hardly be expected to generate enough additional capital to finance Latin American growth.

Johnson pays special attention to Sub-Saharan Africa, the only region to experience negative economic growth in the 1980's (with an annual decline of 4.3 percent). Though Africa has abundant labor and is rich in natural resources, there is no nation on the continent to serve as the engine of growth (Johnson avoids mention of South Africa, which now seems destined to fall to the same forces that have ruined the rest of the region), nor is Africa linked to any stronger region. Its ties have been with Europe, but a unified Western Europe will turn now to brighter prospects in the former Soviet empire. The oil-rich Arab states have capital to invest in their neighboring region but have not done so because Arabs "continue to treat Black Africans as inferior beings" fit only for the continuing slave trade.

Obviously a universal feeling of brotherhood is a long way off. Johnson believes, however, that the United States can still prosper in a world of competing regional empires if it deploys its assets wisely. But to do so Americans must perform the most difficult of all tasks. They must "view the world as it is rather than as they would like it to be."

William R. Hawkins is director of the Economic Security Advocacy Center of the U.S. Business and Industrial Council.

Clap & Trap

by John Lukacs

The End of History and the Last Man
by Francis Fukuyama
New York: The Free Press; 400 pp., $24.95

The Democracy Trap: Pitfalls of the Post-Cold War World
by Graham E. Fuller
New York: Dutton; 285 pp., $20.00

◆

I had heard about, but not read, "The End of History?" Francis Fukuyama's star-burst essay published in 1989; but I felt a twinge of sympathy for him as his critics chortled and pointed at history rumbling anew: people dancing atop the Berlin Wall, the Soviet Union falling to pieces, an American Army flying into Arabia. The end of history? I thought that perhaps that was not really what Fukuyama meant, that what he was espying was a new structure for history after the idea of democracy—of popular sovereignty—had been instituted everywhere in the world. But after reading Fukuyama's ideas in full elaboration, I regret to say that I was wrong; and I am appalled to find that Fukuyama is a fool. I do not use the epithet lightly. Fukuyama is "a former deputy director of the U. S. State Department's Policy Planning Staff." To paraphrase Henry Adams, the evolution of American foreign policy planning from George Kennan to Francis Fukuyama is sufficient evidence to disprove all the theories of Darwin.

Fukuyama thinks that liberal democracy has conquered the world. Totalitarianism is gone forever. Nationalism is something that he does not, or cannot, consider. The globe is becoming one vast international network. Freedom and the market economy (whatever *that* is) have become, or are about to become, nearly universal. He is concerned with a world bereft of useful and useless strife. Yet that, according to Fukuyama, may become a moral problem. History will not only become unintelligible, but will cease to exist. This may or may not be regrettable, but "The Worldwide Liberal Revolution"—the title of his central chapter—has seen that it will happen.

The world as seen by Fukuyama consists almost entirely of "Liberal Nations," with Bosnia or Georgia or Cambodia or Zambia awash with people incarnating the ideas of John Locke, William Gladstone, Benjamin Constant, and Felix Frankfurter. But of course the very opposite is true. Intellectuals not only excel at not seeing forests for trees; they often cannot see a hog from a log. Liberalism is dying throughout the world, including in the United States, where its decay and the rise of the "conservative" movement began at the precise moment—1955—when another intellectual, the Harvard professor Louis Hartz, published his prize-winning book *The Liberal Tradition in America*, pronouncing the liberal tradition as the *only* political reality in America. Hartz, though an academic plodder, was by comparison with Fukuyama a sage.

Fukuyama's mind is philosophical, whence his troubles arise. Like his mentor Leo Strauss he knows (or thinks he knows) plenty of philosophy, while his ignorance of history is lamentable and abysmal. Among other things, Fukuya-

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ma is enamored of a Greek term favored by the Straussians: *thymos*, meaning (to him) the essence of the human condition. (Another of his key chapters bears this title: "The Rise and Fall of *Thymos*.") This word he stuffs promiscuously into his fruitcake, while coining other words such as "hypothymia" and "megalothymia," etc. According to my Greek dictionary *thymos* means thyme, a pleasant spice. Unfortunately Fukuyama's *thymos* has nothing to do with spices.

Owing to lack of space, but also because history (and human nature) do not follow the laws of physics—meaning that while it is easier to wrestle with a weak body than with a strong one, it is more difficult to wrestle with a weak mind than with a strong one—in this review I must let Fukuyama speak for himself. Fukuyama has given his chapters such titles as "The Weakness of Strong States II, or, Eating Pineapples on the Moon," and "The Victory of the VCR." In his introduction, he writes: "In lieu of conventional thanks to a typist for helping to prepare the manuscript, I should perhaps acknowledge the work of the designers of the Intel 80386 microprocessor." He should. And it shows.

Early in his book Fukuyama says that what he meant by the end of history was not history, but History (his capitalization): "history understood as a single, coherent, evolutionary process, when taking into account the experience of all peoples in all times." *Whew*. Fukuyama says that he gets this concept of History from Hegel, but he later adds that his philosophy is really a compound of Hegel and of the latter's modern exegete, Kojève. Thereafter he refers sometimes to "Hegel-Kojève," which to me evokes something like "Häagen-Dazs." "Our deepest thinkers," he writes, "have concluded that there is no such thing as history—that is, a meaningful order to the broad sweep of human events." "Deepest thinkers" is good. "Virtually everyone professionally engaged in the study of politics and foreign policy believed in the permanence of Communism; its worldwide collapse in the late 1980s was therefore almost totally unanticipated." Not by this reviewer, but that is not the point. The point is Fukuyama's uncontrollable affection for such words as *virtually* and *totally*: "For many Americans the family, now no longer extended or nuclear, is virtually the only form of associational life or community they know." Tell that to the Marines. (Or to the Mafia.) "People in the Soviet Union and PRC turned out not to be the atomized, dependent, authority-craving children that earlier Western theories projected them to be. They proved instead to be adults who could tell truth from falsehood, right from wrong, and who sought, like other adults in the old age of mankind [what was *that*?] recognition of their own adulthood and autonomy." (I saw one of these young Chinese adults in Tiananmen Square, beaming at an American television reporter, speaking into the camera: "I like American girls, American girls can see me now!")

To continue: "It is possible for a country to be liberal without being particularly democratic, as was eighteenth-century Britain." (The political term "liberal" did not then exist, but no matter.) "Not everyone can be a concert pianist or a center for the Lakers, nor do they have, as Madison noted, equal facilities for acquiring property." "Ken Kesey's 1962 novel, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, provides an illustration of the totalitarian aspiration." "People today resemble Woody Allen's character Mickey Sachs." Then Dr. Fukuyama climbs Mount Fujiyama, looks around, and ponders: "What is man?"

Clap and Trap. The other grand contemporary work dealing with the condition of mankind and with its principalities and powers is Graham Fuller's *The Democracy Trap*. (The proof copy says that the introduction is by Francis Fukuyama, but I was relieved not to find that in my copy.) Fuller is more realistic and pessimistic than Fukuyama, but for the wrong reason. Someone once said (it is not a very clever saying) that a pessimist is an optimist with experience. Yet quality of experience (including bureaucratic experience) depends entirely on quality of thought. Fuller has plenty of thoughts, but of what quality? He writes of the "Cold War Century," whose "struggle began in 1917 with the challenge to the capitalist world posed by the Bolshevik revolution." I would have thought that the world struggle started in 1914, with a horrible world war of which the revolution in Russia was but a consequence; but who am I to argue with a master policy thinker such as Fuller? "The invention of the teenager, in fact, is probably one of the most far-reaching acts of American social creativity," he adds.

A fact is a fact, no doubt. Compared to Fukuyama's jappy calligraphy Fuller writes like a red-faced ham-handed American, vulgar to the core: "Whatever value the Cold War had in helping to keep the West's ideological socks up in Europe and at home . . ." Oh, for the Order of the Garter! In the end, Fuller on Fuller: "As a senior-level Intelligence Officer responsible for long-range National Estimates at the Central Intelligence Agency (essentially crystal-balling the future of strategic issues for policymakers at the White House and the State and Defense Departments), I had been regularly required to think about global issues and trends as the heart of my daily work for the Director of Central Intelligence."

This is laughing matter no longer. For anyone honestly concerned with the destiny of the republic, it is a matter for rage, bitterness, and tears.

John Lukacs' most recent book is The Duel, 10 May-31 July 1940: The Eighty-Day Struggle Between Churchill and Hitler.

Lastest With the Leastest

by J.O. Tate

A Battle From the Start: The Life of Nathan Bedford Forrest
by Brian Steel Wills
New York: HarperCollins;
457 pp., $30.00

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Since Professor Wills has a way of relating episodes that transforms the dramatic into the soporific and turns the concrete into the abstract, this first biography of Forrest to be written since 1944 is probably the last that anyone should read. An unrelenting tendentiousness warps his interpretation of even the most transparent matters, so that the essential simplicity of Forrest escapes the attention of the historian, as does the tragic conflict of the Civil War.

Professor Wills' way of interpreting action is more likely to cause this vol-

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ume to be slammed shut than to be scanned. The mini-tale of the captured Captain S. L. Freeman on page 108 is a salient example: "Following a brief struggle, the Confederates succeeded in recapturing their artillery pieces, but failed to liberate Captain Freeman. Their failure cost him his life. As he ran along in the hands of his captors, they apparently did not believe that he was running fast enough, as one of the Union cavalrymen shot him through the head and rode away." Thus the murder of Captain Sam Freeman is blamed on the Southerners who couldn't extricate him from federal hands and not on the Yankee who pulled the trigger. Such a logic would produce some striking results, if universally applied.

But here such a logic is mostly restricted to the interpretation of the mind, motives, and actions of Nathan Bedford Forrest, whom even Sherman called "the most remarkable man our Civil War produced on either side." In Wills' rehash of Forrest's tragic confrontation with Lieutenant A. Wills Gould, for example, the "temper," "harsh actions towards his friends," "mood," "hair-trigger temper," "anger," "passion," etc., attributed to Forrest are assembled to bury the point—namely, that Gould shot Forrest with a pistol, which the General construed as an attack upon his person committed with intent to do grievous bodily harm. Forrest's displeasure at being shot by his own lieutenant and his subsequent lethal response with a knife seem somehow to constitute a fault of character. Wills concludes: "Indeed, had the general played a more noble role in the affair, even at the end of it, his earliest biographers, Thomas Jordan and J. P. Pryor, would have surely included it in their account. Instead they conspicuously avoided the entire subject." Of course they did—but not because the incident discredited Forrest. Jordan and Pryor omitted the story because Lieutenant Gould's behavior was disgraceful to him and embarrassing to his relatives. John Wyeth's subsequent account omitted Gould's name for the same reason. Wills goes to considerable trouble to distort the story of Lieutenant Gould.

But then again, throughout this account we are asked in effect to disapprove of Forrest's manners. Forrest actually raises his voice at people during moments of stress, such as when under attack by thousands of invaders trying to kill him and his associates with rifles and cannons. Forrest even allows oaths to pass his lips, and during the biggest war ever fought in the Western Hemisphere he behaves violently on the battlefield, ordering his men to fight and sometimes even doing so himself! *Cet animal est très méchant, / Quand on l'attaque il se défend.*

As Professor Wills skirts the obvious with theories, we may wonder if we have missed the point, or rather whether the point has missed the historian:

> Whether Forrest engaged in violence because he was a back-country Southerner or because violence was part of his character, he undoubtedly embodied the struggle between "passion" and "control" that Dickson Bruce discussed in *Violence and Culture in the Antebellum South*. He struggled for control over his emotions throughout his life. Consequently, he emphasized discipline and order, both as a civilian and as a military commander.

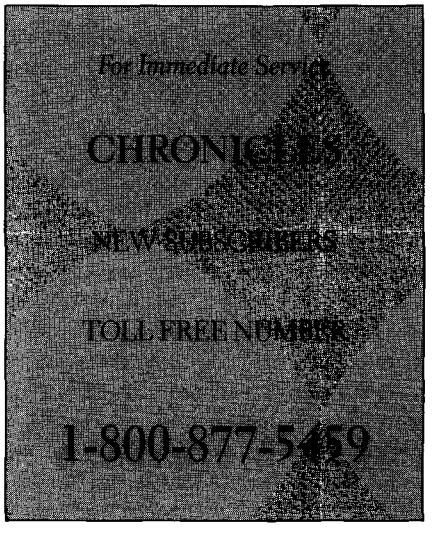
Is it necessary to point out that by definition all humans feel a conflict between passion and control or that (also by definition) all leaders, civilian and military, emphasize order? Or that Forrest never heard of Bruce's 1979 book?

Among other shortcomings, Wills' book gives little sense of why Forrest was a hero to his people, why he was the subject of so many stories as to enter the folklore of the South and of the world ("Firstest with the mostest"), or why—until now—he attracted only outstanding writers. Even in fiction the general looms large, yet Wills' treatment of Forrest in Faulkner is niggling, and Forrest in Caroline Gordon's *None Shall Look Back* (1936), in Shelby Foote's *Shiloh* (1952), in Perry Lentz's *The Falling Hills* (1967), and in Lawrence Wells' *Rommel and the Rebel* (1986) goes unmentioned.

What does not go unmentioned are recent efforts by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Congress of Racial Equality to remove the bronze equestrian statue of Forrest in Memphis, disinter the bones of him and his wife presently buried thereunder, and rename Forrest Park. Though Forrest's fame was earned on the field of battle, his days as a slave trader before the war and as the reputed leader of the first Klan after it have made him, even more than other Confederate icons, a convenient target for a war upon history. It is hard to see how destroying the memorial of a hero can promote either the advancement of colored people or racial equality, unless of course what is desired is a principle of effacement that will later be applied to all those drives and avenues (not streets) named for the Reverend "Dr." Martin Luther King, Jr.

Well, Forrest Avenue in Atlanta had its name altered about 13 years ago with little result as far as advancement or equality is concerned, though I think such a contemptuous gesture says a lot about a culture that dares not acknowledge the greatest fighting man in its own history. While awaiting the inevitable outcome of such emasculation, some may yet wish to contemplate the heroic parabola of Forrest while we are still allowed to do so. The rough-hewn, self-taught soldier who refused to surrender at Fort Donelson, who predicted the results at Shiloh, who rebuked Bragg after Chickamauga, and who defended the Army of Tennessee after the mad Hood had wrecked it, was a man whose native gumption was always superior to the mere education of professionals. His story is best told by Andrew Lytle, whose *Bedford Forrest and His Critter Company* (1931) has just now been republished by J. S. Sanders of Nashville. Lytle's life of Forrest is highly recommended to all those, of whatever hue or degree of advancement, who know a hero when they see one.

J.O. Tate is a professor of English at Dowling College on Long Island.



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Letter From Tucson

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

Sanctity & Sanctuary

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From the *barrio* of South Tucson, the Tucson Mountains appeared clean and sharp like hammered copper on a clear morning following the *equipata* or winter rains, nearly the season's last; the glassy towers downtown held the sky reflected in squares of wavery unnatural blue. The university students were on spring break and already the snowbirds were flying north, emptying the hundreds of square miles of retirement villages, trailer parks, Active Adult communities, and golf links; within six weeks the population of greater Tucson would have dropped from around seven hundred thousand to four hundred and fifty thousand people. In the Southside *barrios*, no one was likely to know the difference.

Three-Seventeen West Twenty-Third Street was in a neighborhood of crumbling adobe houses, shacks, rotting pancake pear, and collapsing fences. At 9:30 on a Sunday morning, dark men in straw hats sat in vacant lots under rusty palm trees drinking beer, and middle-aged Caucasians with their hair in pigtails, wearing faded military clothes and carrying packs on their backs, walked the empty streets. A sign outside said "*Este es sanctuario de Dios para los opprimidos de Centro America*"; another beside it, "Southside Presbyterian Church." A nylon tent was pitched in the churchyard and a line hung with clothes stretched across the grass. Cars stood tightly parked along the curb and in the adjacent streets, and the church parking lot was filled.

Southside Presbyterian Church and its pastor, the Reverend John M. Fife, are the seed from which the sanctuary movement has developed since the late 1970's. Sanctuary, operating on the model of the Underground Railroad in antebellum days, illegally receives refugees from Latin and Central America, particularly Guatemala and El Salvador, and passes them along from one sanctuary church to another across the United States and Canada. Sanctuary argues that Washington, having fomented political violence by its antirevolutionary policies, must take responsibility for the victims of counterrevolution by accepting them as political refugees to the United States; the government insists that they are not political but economic refugees, and that its responsibility is to control the country's borders and to implement its immigration laws. On May 1, 1986, the conviction in Tucson's federal court of eight sanctuary activists, including the Reverend Fife, helped to cap the movement's national prominence.

An elderly black man, formally dressed in a dark coat and necktie, stood distributing programs outside the packed meeting hall, shabby whitewashed adobe painted blue up front. Chairs were arranged on both sides of the building, against the back wall facing the pulpit and, behind it, the cross—seven or eight feet tall and constructed from roughened unpainted timbers. The congregation included some elderly, staid, rather prim-looking couples, a few Mexicans, and a number of Central Americans seated cross-legged on the floor behind the pulpit. The rest were mostly men with graying beards and graying long hair and their women in long-skirted print dresses and shawls. A fat black woman, spectacled and with a loop of pearls on her wide bosom, sat on a benchseat behind the piano. She seemed bursting with energy and looked ready to throw her instrument at the congregation.

The Reverend Fife was a very tall man with iron-gray hair and a close gray beard, tanned face, and glasses. In his Lenten robes he appeared to stand above the cross, which he nearly obliterated by his presence. He was speaking in English as I entered the church and paused behind the final row of chairs. A hymn was sung in Spanish, and when the people had subsided in their seats Fife stood forward from the pulpit. "Who among you here today has been 'born again'?" he demanded.

A few hands went up, and the Reverend Fife smiled upon these ironically.

"What is it about those words, 'born again,' that make so many of us—Presbyterians, Catholics, and others—uncomfortable? It's that they have been appropriated by a very narrow segment of Christianity to mean people who are against communism, against abortion, against change. But that isn't what being born again means to us, is it? It better not be!" the Reverend Fife cried. "What do people mean when they speak of the 'old-time religion'? They mean the religion of a day that is gone, when religion was the support of an unjust system, and the privileged class that owned the system was religious! While what *we* mean by being born again is to realize how the culture and the society corrupt our values and corrupt *us*, and to turn away from those values and from that society." The Reverend Fife showed the points of his white teeth in an expression that appeared to be a smile.

The congregation sang another hymn, and then a Latin man rose and played briefly on a kind of wind instrument; he was followed by the black woman at the piano singing "Amazing Grace" in the style of a Negro revival. After the first verse the people joined in and finished the remaining ones with her. A Spanish gentleman in a gray suit came forward and translated for a very dark young Salvadoran who wished to thank Southside Presbyterian for its support and shelter. When he had spoken two other Salvadorans rose to express their gratitude, moving the Reverend Fife to exclaim: "See? We're 'born again'—we just sang 'Amazing Grace' and now we're having testimonials!" A visitor to Southside Presbyterian pointed out that "Amazing Grace" had been written by a sea captain aboard his slaver when "he realized that he was part of a system he didn't want to be part of anymore" and turned his vessel around. Another visitor, like the first an inhabitant of the Upper Midwest, announced: "The folks at St. Luke's say hello!"

Various people stood to make other announcements. A tweedy-looking man reminded the congregation of the Thursday prayer vigil at the federal building downtown, "with which"—addressing the Reverend Fife—"you are familiar!" "I am well acquainted with it," Fife acknowledged, displaying his teeth. Someone else brought up a potluck dinner at which the Southside delegation to the presidential elections in Nicaragua was expected to report what it had witnessed in Managua, and a woman gave

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the date for a children's march in downtown Tucson in support of the Salvadoran people.

Following the service, the Reverend Fife baptized an infant, "child of Cecil Billingsley and Joelle Waldron." The choir celebrated by singing a syncopated hymn and accompanying it with the clapping of hands, while a young black woman in a scarlet dress boogied to the music. As the congregation filed out into the fresh and shiny morning, a small girl tugged at the Reverend's robe. He bent to her, they whispered, and suddenly he laughed and swung her onto his shoulder where she seized the rope overhead and rang the church bell loudly, twice.

Chilton Williamson, Jr., is senior editor for books at Chronicles.

Letter From Russia

by Lawrence A. Uzzell

Orthodoxy and Nationalism

◆

Early in my first Russian-language course, our professor noted that the word for "Sunday" is the same as the word for "resurrection." Somebody asked her how that word had managed to survive under 70 years of totalitarian atheism. She replied that Russian is so permeated with Christian images that it would be impossible to remove them without abandoning the entire language.

Orthodox Christianity will have a profound influence on Russia in the 21st century. Western journalists, who have an even worse grasp of Orthodoxy than of pre-Vatican II Catholicism or evangelical Protestantism, see that influence almost entirely in terms of nationalist bigotry. Some see the Orthodox mind as peculiarly hospitable to collectivism and authoritarianism. But in fact, the most tyrannical features of modern Russia are precisely those that have been borrowed from *Western* models. When Peter the Great and his successors abolished the patriarchate of Moscow and turned the Orthodox Church into a virtual branch of government, their inspiration was not ancient Byzantium but Lutheran Sweden. And the totalitarian ideology *par excellence* was copied by Russians from a German atheist.

We clearly cannot predict the future role of Russian Orthodoxy by watching Patriarch Alexei and today's other top bishops, who got where they are today by kissing the hands that enslaved them, nor by examining the ecclesiastical bureaucrats of the 19th century. The leaders of the 21st-century Russian Orthodox Church will be independent actors, drawing on a tradition that predates Peter the Great by 18 centuries. For a glimpse of what this revitalized tradition might be like, we need only read one book: an almost forgotten volume, published in Moscow in 1909, entitled *Vekhi* or "Milestones." *Vekhi* is a collection of essays by seven Russian intellectuals, a prophetic warning against the revolutionary abyss into which Russia was about to fall. Most of its authors had been Marxists in their youth. Several had suffered arrest or exile under the czarist government. But by 1909 they were well along in their various pilgrimages back toward tradition and religion. All but one would later go into exile after the Bolshevik victory.

One of these authors, for example, was an economics professor who later became an Orthodox priest and head of the Orthodox seminary in Paris. Another one, also an economist, eventually converted to Orthodoxy from Judaism. Yet another, Nikolai Berdiaev, became one of the leading philosophers and religious thinkers of the 20th century. And Petr Struve, who had been a leading Marxist theoretician in the 1890's, would lead the journalistic crusade *against* the Soviet state after 1917.

The *Vekhi* authors repudiated the central tenet of socialism, that the salvation of mankind comes through politics. As one of them said, "We recognize the primacy . . . of spiritual life over the outward forms of society. . . . The inner life of the individual . . . and not . . . some political order is the only solid basis for every social structure." Another affirmed, "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you, so is the Kingdom of the Devil."

But *Vekhi* is only indirectly a book about politics; it is more a book about men's souls, specifically the souls of the revolutionary intelligentsia. Reading it is like reading Dostoyevsky's novel *The Devils*; it is so prophetic about the moral character of the revolutionary regime that you have to remind yourself that it was written *before* 1917, not afterward. It dissects the revolutionary soul with the kind of unsparing precision and depth of knowledge available only to people who were former revolutionaries themselves.

At every point, the *Vekhi* authors rejected the new morality of the revolution in favor of an older morality drawn from sources such as the Bible. They rejected what one of them called "the idolatrous worship of party interests . . . that unprincipled morality that judges deeds and thoughts from the point of view of their partisan usefulness." Instead of *partinost*, or "party spirit," they upheld the pursuit of objective truth and intellectual integrity. Instead of factional bitterness and fanaticism, they upheld humility, forgiveness, and reconciliation. Instead of nihilism and terrorism, they upheld a moderate politics of constitution-building and of respect for historical institutions. Instead of economic determinism, they upheld individual freedom and responsibility. Instead of envy and romantic alienation, they upheld competence and hard work. Instead of materialism, they upheld absolute moral standards toward which men strive—and by which they are judged.

In some ways this vision is just as incompatible with today's Western consumer culture as with revolutionary socialism. You could apply whole paragraphs of *Vekhi*'s chapter on Russian student life to the self-indulgent baby-boomers of our own society, almost without changing a word. *Vekhi* describes the same worship of youth, the same pursuit of ideological fads at the expense of education, the same self-righteous preachiness on issues of public and political morality combined with licentious hedonism on issues of personal morality. One can imagine what the *Vekhi* group would have to say about Soviet yuppies who yearn for American blue jeans.

It may seem from this description

John Shelton Reed is on vacation this month. His faithful readers may wish to read his article in the November issue of Reason.

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that the *Vekhi* authors were simply more moderate socialists than the Bolsheviks, that perhaps they were like the Mensheviks or the Social Revolutionaries. Not so: *Vekhi* rejected not just Bolshevism, but *all* forms of revolutionary Marxism and populism. In 1918, after the full horror of Leninist rule had become manifest, one *Vekhi* contributor wrote that "the Russian socialists, had they found themselves in power, would either have had to remain simple chatterers, doing nothing to put their ideas into practice, or else to have done from A to Z everything that the Bolsheviks did."

Some of the most fascinating passages in *Vekhi* are about economics. Both Nikolai Berdiaev the philosopher and Semen Frank the economist saw economic production as analogous to spiritual and cultural creativity; both saw production as more valuable than distribution; and both rebuked the socialists for reversing this priority. Berdiaev said that "in the thoughts and feelings of the Russian intelligentsia, the claims of distribution and equalization always outweighed the claims of production and creation. This applies equally to the material and the spiritual realms."

Frank said that "distribution . . . is a mechanical rearrangement of ready-made elements, in contrast to production, the creative formation of the new. And socialism is a world view in which the idea of distribution has replaced the idea of production. . . . The intelligentsia is almost as unconcerned about spiritual production, the accumulation of ideal values, as it is about material production; the development of science, literature, art, and culture in general are much less dear to it than the distribution of ready-made spiritual goods to the masses. . . . It is not the . . . scholar, artist, inventor or philosopher who earns the honorable title of cultural worker, but . . . the teacher, popularizer or propagandist."

Unlike socialism, the *Vekhi* paradigm is quite hospitable to entrepreneurship and private property rights. Unlike either the socialists *or* the Slavophile reactionaries, the *Vekhi* authors explicitly opposed the traditional peasant communes in favor of individual ownership of land. In fact, one reason to read *Vekhi* today is as an antidote to the tendency to classify all Russian thinkers as either Westernizers or Slavophiles—with the latter usually cast as the bad guys. The *Vekhi* authors don't fit neatly into either of these categories. They saw themselves as Russian nationalists, but they rejected the Slavophiles' deliberate isolation from Western culture. They were eager to learn from Western examples such as the English constitutional tradition or the German university system. In fact, they accused the revolutionaries of being too *narrow* in their borrowings from the West, of crudely imitating the utopian socialism of the early 19th century and ignoring everything else.

Within their own lifetimes, the authors of *Vekhi* failed in just about everything they were trying to do. They failed to steer the moderate wing of the Kadet Party away from its fatal alliance with the hard left. They failed to persuade the alienated intelligentsia to work for constitutional reform within the czarist system. They failed to inoculate their country against the epidemic that they saw coming. On the other hand, they were vindicated by the fulfillment of their darkest prophecies.

But in the long run, the *Vekhi* group may experience the same fate as one of the Western writers who influenced them, like them an early opponent of a seemingly irresistible revolution: Edmund Burke. In the 1790's it seemed that Burke's ideas were also doomed for the trash-bin of history. But it turned out that his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* enjoyed its greatest influence not in the 1790's but many decades after his death. In the 21st century Russia may see a similar resurrection: that of a moral and social vision based on Orthodox Christian humanism.

Lawrence A. Uzzell is vice-president of the Jamestown Foundation in Washington, D.C. He writes from Moscow, where he is opening a branch of the foundation.

LIBERAL ARTS

AFFIRMATIVE-ACTION SOUP

The University of Wisconsin's so-called "Madison Plan" has come under attack in recent months for *proving* to result in what it was *intended* to result in all along: preferential treatment of minorities in admissions, financial aid, and hiring.

As reported by the *Wisconsin State Journal* last April, a 1981 graduate of the UW-Madison Law School has filed a lawsuit against the school's hiring practices. E. H. Reise, who graduated in the top five percent of his class and who has had a "lifelong ambition" to teach at Madison, has asked that the university be ordered to hire him and to pay him millions of dollars in damages for illegally discriminating against white men by hiring only women and minorities as full-time professors for its law school since 1986. "Under the Madison Plan," said Reise's attorney to the federal court jury hearing the case, "no white Caucasian male could be hired. The funds were only available for minorities and, in some cases, women." Law school Dean Daniel Bernstine acknowledged in previous testimony that the school has received $640,750 to hire women and minorities since the Madison Plan was introduced in 1988—money which, as Bernstine admitted in court, would not have been granted to hire white men.

The university's student recruitment policy, "Design for Diversity," has also come under attack. As reported last April in Madison's *Capital Times*, UW regent Phyllis Krutsch has questioned whether "Instead of recruiting qualified students, [we are] recruiting students who are unprepared?" James Sulton, special assistant to the UW president on minority affairs, claims such students are admitted "only if the university has in place support services" for them. Krutsch also expressed concern about the fact that 50 percent of the aid earmarked for minority or disadvantaged students is awarded to out-of-state residents rather than Wisconsin residents, who are supposed to have first dibs on the money. Katherine Lyall, UW System President, replied that the "Design for Diversity" plan "isn't soup yet, but we're going to persist until it is."

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Letter From Baton Rouge

by John Patrick Zmirak

Old Love

◆

My Downtown is dying. That is perhaps saying too little; Downtown is nearly dead. The neat, grid-patterned, well-paved streets of the old Baton Rouge, the white hot cement Huey Long pounded Florsheim heel and toe against, the small optimistic stores set up in the 30's and 40's and equipped with illuminated signs in the 50's and 60's with names like Lerner's Dress Shop and Grossman's Hats and Landry's Famous Po-Boys, the tree-lined pedestrian sidewalks with jeweler's standing clocks and newsstands, all this is nearly gone. Now parking lots gape where stores once stood, but few cars sit in them, and fewer by night. The old things are passing away—like streets with sidewalks, designed for gentlemen and ladies to walk up and down on and to speak to each other in passing, replaced by the vast distended nonplaces of steel and glass towering malls, their huge cooling units pumping nonair through the nonplace to hose down the nonpeople who spend their nontime and nonmoney there. Oh, yes, the cars and the money are real, especially the cars equipped with phones and German precision stereos that insulate one nonperson from the other imitation people who, in their real cars, speed by like smears of paint on the road that has no sidewalk or shoulder but only enormous billboards with giants flashing man-high teeth at the grey interchangeable facts passing by.

And Downtown is more beautiful because it is dying. If things biological are lovelier in the bloom of youth—the pert upstanding breast, straight back, clear eye, and thick hair—things of artifice are their negative. Their moment of greatness, of sheer poignant grace when they must be the more loved, is when they are dying, when the sun's light shines sickly on them from the cloudless jaundiced west, as the time-ruined lace of the wedding dress, the sepia-ancestor prints, the shreds of battle flags, and the fishbone-delicate spines of decaying books attest. There is something in the sensate soul that loves the emptying lanes of the whiteless city (the pink faces fled to chop down the piney-woods and put up aluminum churches and aluminum siding in taxless subdivisions beyond the buslines where there are no blacks, no poor, no memory), the stores that the old white and new black owners cannot afford to remodel and so bear the traces of time, proving that indeed time has passed and that the past was a time, not the cold imperial machine, the endless ravening Present that marches onward like a Terminator.

I am not speaking of nostalgia. The very things whose beauty I have learned to see in the yellowing light were once stark and cold and new themselves, burning at noon silver wounds into the memory of those who knew what they replaced. The streetcars whose passing I mourn and whose forlorn rails still show like stretch marks here and there, when they displaced the horse and carriage, must have seemed the very monstrous engines of Progress. I would have hated them then. So the Mass of Trent, whose melancholy, humble strains can be heard in most cities only in the oldest, poorest, least-renovated churches near the hollow old heart of town, must have jangled baroque and cacophonous in the late medieval ear, seduced by the sweetest old strains of text-mangling polyphony and the fervid Gallican excess of litany and gesture. That was four hundred years ago. Now sung by old forgotten priests in what tattered gold thread and stained silk escaped the bonfire of the 70's, with reluctant writs of permission, rebounding off unplastered walls to the ears of the poor, the old, the alienated, and the eccentric who clutch bone rosaries in anger-clenched knuckles, the Latin Mass breathes the very air of consolation to the soul. To the souls gathered kneeling about the marble altar rail, the very cracks in the rail are precious, scored by other nourished souls that now wait breathing the gray air of Purgation until our prayers for them accumulate, the Church Suffering and the Church Perduring.

Conservatives should love the poor; we love all old things that endure, and the poor we have always had with us. The poor preserve the past—they can't afford new ugly soulless acquisitions and must make do with what has become beautiful over time. While thin pale men in Bauhaus angular rooms in cool machine-tooled Germany invented atonalism and fascism, black cane-choppers and sharecroppers dug through the compost of our tangled pasts to raise the Blues over the Ford-tossed dust of Southern roads, reaching deep into Africa our common rootbed to produce deep sad songs that as soon as sung once sounded venerable and sacred, so much of the past did they carry in their strains.

Civilization is not a private matter, nor is it subject to renovation, self-help, or utopian renewal. As delicate and ambiguous as its father the brain or its mother the body, its life is the public square. Any city that lacks a public place where men without paying or feeling shiftless may mingle and argue and feed the birds does not deserve the name. It is a giant hospital wing, with private rooms and only a common toilet. It deserves to be destroyed by fire. May the malediction of an angry God fall upon it; may its lawns wither and its kidney-shaped pools turn black with rotting fish of mysterious provenance; may its pets die of loneliness; may its garages be infested with raccoons and opossums; may its over-dressed close-coiffed planned Montessori children neglect their Japanese lessons and run off to join the circus or the Marines; may its Unitarians lose their faith; may its Republicans lose their jobs.

This process by which the new and appalling gains over time the luster of rarity and fragility—an act of sympathy, perhaps, of our mortal flesh for other fleeting things and not of the mind, which alone daydreams a terrestrial eternity—will continue. One hopes, though he cannot imagine, that a purple-plastic Circle K store will in time seduce the sympathy as the huge plaintive rusting root beer mug of Frost-Top currently does; one wishes, though he can hardly hope, that the telegraph English and gymnastics of the modern Mass will someday be gentle, soothing, and dignified; one imagines fondly that the countertop condom racks will someday make us laugh gently at human folly, as their iron-girded men's room ancestors do now in truckstops. It is the law of history. But O, it is hard to picture!

John Patrick Zmirak is the assistant editor of Success *magazine.*

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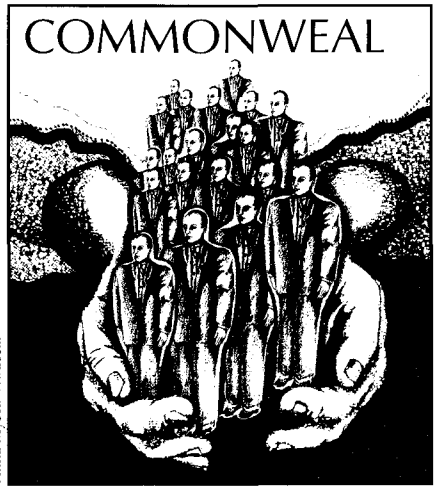

Anna Ulyeck-Wodecki

The Great San Jose Finger Flap

by James P. Degnan

Remembering Jessica Mitford

I recently watched a television special about the life and times of Jessica Mitford, and the program took me back fifteen years or so to my first meeting with Jessica. It was mid-December, the beginning of the Christmas recess at San Jose State College, and Jessica had been informed that, at the close of the present semester, she would not be rehired as Distinguished Professor of Sociology. Because she had refused to comply with the California State College rule that all teachers in the system had to be fingerprinted, she had been fired, or, as the dean of social sciences, James Sawrey, put it—to Jessica's immense delight—"dehired."

Rather than fingerprints, Jessica had submitted to the college trustees a set of her toeprints, and on the San Jose State campus stickers and buttons proclaiming "Jessica Thumbs Her Toes" abounded.

To interview Jessica, I had arranged to drive her from San Jose to her home in Oakland, and during the drive, in high spirits, she discussed her upcoming dismissal. "From distinguished professor to extinguished professor in three short weeks," she twitted. "Really, I haven't the faintest idea how I got to be a distinguished professor. I never even went to school. Mother insisted that I learn to read, though, and that's been jolly useful, learning to read, I mean."

She wore red pumps and a red and blue dress patterned like a stained glass window. Her hair was thin and of a peculiar filing cabinet gray. She wore thick, gray, gogglelike horn rims, behind which blinked the famous Mitford eyes—eyes a British novelist once described as "blue and cold and crazy."

During the fifty-mile drive, Jessica chattered on about many things. About her one-time membership in the Communist Party: "Oh certainly I was a member of the CP, but really, it was an awful bore—all that silly authoritarianism." About sociology: "I can't begin to say what a lot of bosh it is." About her late father, Lord Redesdale: "He hated blacks, foreigners, and divorcées. He called them all 'filthy Huns.' He also hated artists. Once he called Jacob Epstein a 'filthy Hun.'" About her fighting against Franco in the Spanish Civil War: "I kept getting concerned letters from my nanny in England. She kept worrying that I had no suitable clothes to fight in."

I remember stopping in heavy traffic and questioning her about her book *Kind and Usual Punishment*, about her suggestion in that book that prisons be abolished because only the poor, blacks, and other minorities ever get sent to prison. "People like Spiro Agnew never go to prison," she declared.

"Maybe so," I said, "but shouldn't they? Obviously, you believe people like Agnew should be sent to prison?" I looked toward her for an answer. A smile melted from her face, and she fixed me with the frosty Mitford eyes: "Yes, but they won't be," she declared, making clear that this line of our conversation was at an end.

With the exception of an ornate 18th-century French clock on the dining room mantelpiece, I was surprised to find the downstairs area of Jessica's two-story frame house on Regent Street in Oakland rather modest and staid. In a downstairs bathroom, though, things picked up a bit. Here the walls were covered with ads from Jessica's favorite periodicals—mortuary magazines like *Sunnyside*, *National Casket*, and *Mortuary Management*. One ad described the advantages of the "Layaway Burial Plan," another proclaimed "Embalming Will Make You Look Younger." And above the toilet was a brightly colored poster of Salome holding aloft the severed head of John the Baptist and proudly declaring "Look What Daddy Gave Me Just For Dancing."

Chain-smoking unfiltered Chesterfields—"They're positively number one on the Surgeon General's list of cancer-causers," she assured me—Jessica wandered about the house in a rather distracted manner. We talked more about her family: about her father ("Farve"), her mother ("Muv"), and her sisters—Nancy, Diana, Pamela, Unity, and Deborah. About Muv's attitude toward the working classes. "I'm not an enemy of the working classes," Muv would insist in arguments with the young Jessica, "I think some of them are perfectly sweet." About Farve's reaction to the mention of Picasso's name: "Damned sewer. Stinks to merry hell!" About Nancy's admonition to Jessica, who could never learn to ride a horse because she kept falling off: "Now Jessica, *do* try to stay on. You know how cross Muv will be if you break your arm again."

We talked about Jessica's classic muckraking attack on the funeral industry, *The American Way of Death*, and about her article "Let Us Now Appraise Famous Writers"—a piece that appeared in the *Atlantic* and singlehandedly laid to rest Bennett Cerf's fraudulent Famous Writers School. "Oh I've made a small fortune on the death book," she said, "but when I wrote it, I hadn't the faintest idea anyone would be interested. I remember asking Bob [her husband, Oakland attorney Robert Treuhaft], 'Whoever would want such a book?'" Asked if she planned on one of the plain pine-box funerals she champions in *The American Way*, she chirped: "Oh heavens no. I expect a five-horse affair."

We were interrupted by Jessica's maid, Sally, a young English woman wearing a gold ring through one of her nostrils. Sally reminded Jessica that dinner guests would soon be arriving, and

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we ended our conversation, agreeing to resume it at one of Jessica's few remaining San Jose State classes after the holidays. "Do come to class," Jessica said, "we're having some convicts in."

Jessica taught two classes: "Muckraking Techniques," a relatively small class of about twenty students, and "The American Way," a huge lecture class of three hundred or so. It was in the latter class—the texts for which were books like George Jackson's *Soledad Brother* and Ramsey Clark's *Crime in America*—that the convicts were scheduled to perform. All was confusion in the huge lecture hall: the microphone wouldn't work; a terrified dog scurried about with several hirsute, scruffy students chasing after it; and Jessica, looking like Lillian Gish playing a governess, ordered the convicts about, shooing them into their seats on the cluttered stage, instructing them how long to speak, and so forth.

From talking with various students in the audience, I gathered that the students were looking forward to a sequence of prison atrocity stories—tales in the Devil's Island genre. But the convicts (ex-cons, really)—Earl Johnson, a man in his 60's, who'd spent most of his life in prison; Willy Holder, president of the Convicts' Union; and two young women who identified themselves only as Patty and Joyce—didn't quite deliver. Earl, a likable man who'd started his career by stealing (for Detroit's Purple Gang) a boxcar of U. S. Army machine guns, began his talk by reading his birth certificate and going on, day by day, from there. After an hour or so, Jessica was forced to cut him off. Willy, head of the Prisoners' Progressive Art League, as well as president of the Convicts' Union, spent most of his time deploring the fact that prison authorities take back nearly 45 percent of the earnings prison artists make selling their work. And one of the young women—Patty, I think it was—seemed more interested in bombarding the audience with obscenities than in relating prison horrors. Patty, pasty-faced and sporting a yellow beehive hairdo, was primarily agitated about prison restrictions on what she obviously regarded as her constitutional right to free and frequent fornication. "Man, who's to say you can't f---? Man, I don't care if you're in the Joint or not. Man that's f---ing with your head. That's a lot of sh--."

Almost three hours went by, and it was nearly time for the class to end when Jessica began asking for questions from the audience. "Now I know," she said, "that everyone is intensely interested in questioning our convicts [Jessica pronounced it, 'Awah Cawnvicts'], so shall we start?"

There was a long silence before someone—obviously determined to hear at least one solid atrocity story—asked Willy to elaborate on the horrible problem of homosexuality in prison. Willy, plainly eager to get back to the plight of the prison artist, replied impatiently: "The homosexual problem is no worse in prison than it is anywhere else." The class had gone into overtime; students were streaming out, and Jessica was forced to call things to a halt.

Jessica's smaller class, "Muckraking Techniques," required each student to do some sort of muckraking project or report. "Some of the projects are jolly good," Jessica informed me, "and some are smashing. One student built a miniature casket, complete with foam rubber and velvet lining." Of the reports, Jessica said, "they don't have to be anything terribly definite, you know. I mean, they can be extremely flexible. One student is sort of looking over the premises at San Quentin and having a sort of forceful speaking out on the matter."

In both classes, Jessica made much use of visiting speakers; of her friends: people like Bettina Aptheker, Maya Angelou, Angela Davis, Germaine Greer, the editors of *Ramparts*, various Black Panthers, and others; and of her enemies: various undertakers, FBI agents, prison officials, and businessmen. The day I attended her class she was having a black psychologist. "His eyes are out of line—you know, he flies his own plane, that sort of thing. He bashed it up or fell out of it or something. He sings in French and mimics cockneys marvelously."

We were in the corridor outside the courtroom of San Jose Superior Court Judge William Ingram, who was to render the final decision on the fingerprints business—"The Great Finger Flap," as Jessica called it. In an earlier compromise decision, Jessica had agreed to let the court keep her fingerprints in a sealed envelope pending a final decision, which boiled down to: if Jessica won, the court would return the fingerprints in the sealed envelope to her; if she lost, the court would give the prints to San Jose State.

I remember Jessica staring out the corridor window at some rose bushes. "I say, roses in January—smashing."

Reporters appeared and Jessica alternated between talking to them, consulting with her lawyer, David Nawi, and giving orders to her student assistant, Novelle Johnson. "Novelle, *do* run and fetch a newspaper. I must see my horoscope. And do check and see when Channel 4 is coming."

By my count, that day was the fourth time in as many months that Jessica had taken San Jose State to court—a schedule Jessica thrived on. Jessica's enemies, many of whom expressed themselves in letters to the editors of Bay Area newspapers, contended that the San Jose litigation was an answer to Jessica's prayers. "It gives her what the Mitfords have always craved," said one letter writer, "lots of publicity; and it gives her another opportunity to do what she does best—bring out the worst in people." A TV cameraman complained: "She's using this thing to promote that g--damn book of hers [*Kind and Usual Punishment*]. Every time she gets a chance, she tries to stick that g--damn book in front of my camera." Whatever Jessica's motives, she certainly succeeded in bringing out the worst in various of the San Jose State officials. "She has," said a San Jose State professor, "succeeded in taking a group of ordinary and really quite amiable bumblers and making them look like extraordinary oafs and bullies."

With malice toward all, Jessica handled the college officials—just as she handled the undertakers and just as she handled the late Bennett Cerf (whom she inveigled into making such devastating admissions about the Famous Writers School as "Frankly, it's an appeal to the gullible"). Again and again, Jessica succeeded in bringing out the worst in the officials and their lawyers, in trapping them into saying and doing things that showed them up as increasingly petty and stupid, as far worse than they really were. The officials fired her; she forced them to rehire her. They canceled her classes; she forced them to reschedule her classes. They refused to pay her; she forced them to pay her. And all with much publicity and fanfare. The officials, from the start, were caught in the Mitford tarbaby, and the more they punched and kicked, the more foolishly tarbound they became.

Jessica's finest hour for bringing out the worst in the San Jose State officials

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doubtlessly occurred during her confrontation with the aforementioned dean of social sciences, a gentleman appropriately named Sawrey. Foolishly, Dean Sawrey permitted this confrontation to take place in Jessica's lecture class before some three hundred students and other Jessica sympathizers, whom she had prepared for Sawrey's appearance. Interrupting the lecture, Sawrey announced that Jessica had been "dehired," that she was no longer authorized to teach, that a qualified replacement would be found, and so forth. And the students, of course, went berserk. They marched around the lecture hall carrying signs reading "We Want Jessica, Not Fingerprints." When the dean tried to speak, he was drowned out by cries of "Jessica! Jessica! We Want Jessica!" and Jessica, clearly the "gallant little Englishwoman" fighting the fascist bully, was able to raise her hand for silence and declare: "They'll have to pick me up bodily and toss me out to keep me from teaching!" Jessica's speech was followed by more wild cheering and by Dean Sawrey scuttling off the stage.

From the time of the Sawrey confrontation it was clear to many veteran press watchers that Jessica had won not only the battle but the war, and Judge Ingram's decision—to return the sealed envelope of fingerprints to Jessica—came as rather an anticlimax.

At the end of the semester, Jessica gave a party at the San Jose State Newman Center to celebrate her victory and her "short happy life as a Distinguished Professor." Women in pale yellow kimonos and men in pink velvet bell-bottoms wandered about the hall. Bettina Aptheker was there, a short woman whose enormous bottom looked even more so in red tight pants, Shana Alexander was there in granny garb, as was Maya Angelou in African headdress. The hall was hot and clouded with sweet smoke. On stage, a female folk singer with guitar and knee-length blond hair howled something about love and baby. The ex-convicts were there: Willy the Artist; Patty the Obscene; and Earl of Purple Gang fame.

The high point of the party, Jessica promised in her invitation, would be a conga line made up of visiting speakers from her classes: funeral directors from the Lima Family Funeral Home of San Jose; Dean Sawrey; various ex-convicts; Bettina Aptheker; Maya Angelou; Paul Du Feu; Germaine Greer and others. Because the funeral directors and Dean Sawrey did not show up, however, the conga line never materialized. Jessica, presiding over a long table covered with jugs of warm white wine, handed out boutonnieres made of pieces of Kleenex on which Jessica had put her lip prints. Asked what her plans were, Jessica said she was going on a six-month European vacation during which she would write an exposé of San Jose State. About the sealed envelope containing her fingerprints, she said: "I have decided, after all, to turn the fingerprints over to San Jose State. I shall," she declared, "cremate the dear little things and present them in a suitable funeral urn to the college board of trustees."

James P. Degnan writes from Aptos, California.

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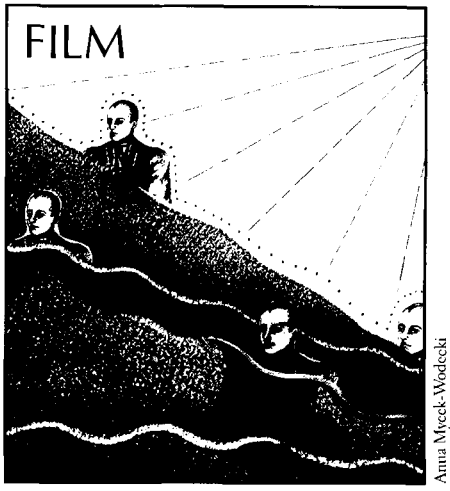

Anna Myeck-Wodecki

Christmastime in Hollywood

by David R. Slavitt

Batman Returns
Produced by Denise di Novi and Tim Burton; Directed by Tim Burton; Screenplay by Daniel Waters; Released by Warner Brothers

Monster in a Box
Produced by Jon Blair and Renee Shafransky; Directed by Nick Broomfield; Written and Performed by Spalding Gray; Released by Fine Line Features

Not only had I not planned to see *Batman Returns*, I had made a very definite promise to myself not to see it. The earlier *Batman* had been boring and incoherent, a product from and for another culture or maybe even another species. Aside from Jack Nicholson's campy bravura, there had been almost nothing to look at. Once burned, twice careful. These plans of mine were foiled, of course—but not by the strenuous promotions and tie-ins (the film grossed $100 million dollars in only 11 days, which would be a record—except that *Batman* hit that mark in only 10 days). What changed my mind was a piece on the op-ed page of the *New York Times* by a couple of seniors at Columbia, Rebecca Roiphe and Daniel Cooper, an essay entitled "Batman and the Jewish Question."

A joke? On the contrary. Their first paragraph reads: "Batman's new adver-

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sary, the Penguin, played by Danny DeVito in 'Batman Returns,' is not just a deformed man, half-human, half-Arctic beast. He is a Jew, down to his hooked nose, pale face and lust for herring. No, Mr. DeVito is not Jewish, but that's just it: Man in penguin costume, Christian in Jew face."

So, reluctantly, skeptically, and with a degree of apprehension that had nothing to do with the film, I betook myself to my local cinema—where, not long ago, some frustrated swain pulled a piece on his companion of the evening, who was evidently resisting his more pacific advances and blandishments, shot her in the midsection, nicked her spine, and paralyzed her for life. This is that theater of cruelty Artaud envisioned; here the oppressed and the deprived come to cheer at the mayhem they have imagined, the havoc and devastation they have dreamed of—which probably will not restore equity and justice but may be, at least for a while, diverting.

Still, I was dubious about the prospects of seeing an old-fashioned 1930's Jew-baiting movie. CUNY Professor Leonard Jeffries may not be entirely sane in his conviction that a conspiracy of Jews and Italians out in Hollywood is responsible for the unflattering portrayal of black people in most American movies. But it is harder to believe that an industry from which Jews are not significantly excluded is going to base a surefire summer hit on the old blood libel. (Mendel Beiliss, thou shouldst be living at this hour!) But these Columbia kids are not crazy. If anything, their report is cautious, modest, and generally understated.

The movie makes no sense whatever, and one is therefore forced to guess at what the point of it might be. It is even a more dismal narrative muddle than the first film, and it is visually uninteresting—mostly murky, dark, and, well, German expressionist. So we are inevitably more receptive to hints and clues than we would be if there were some surface story line to keep our minds minimally occupied. It is clear that Christianity is the film's subject: the action is set around Christmastime, and the lighting of the tree is a significant piece of business that the bad guys are trying either to prevent or to expropriate. The last line of dialogue is that of Batman himself, responding to his manservant's wishes for a Merry Christmas with a hope for "peace on earth and goodwill towards men . . . and women."

The Penguin, on the other hand, is . . . at least as Jewish as Roiphe and Cooper claim. His penguinishness is a clear and deliberate rejection of the debonair figure that Burgess Meredith used to cut in the television series. He waves away that cigarette holder, and we see him instead in the most unflattering way possible, with a new coiffure of greasy hair hanging down in the back (Fagin's do), and he cavorts a lot in his long johns. Gross and grubby, his characteristic beaky nose is no longer the benign Pinocchio cylindrical appendage but a conventional caricature of the Semitic schnozz, which is photographed from a low angle to exaggerate it and make it even more grotesque. The discussion of what is or is not human (nonhuman? subhuman!) is the film's central business. Batman and the Catwoman have their animal natures, too, but they triumph over them or keep them under control. The trouble with the Penguin is that his bestiality runs riot and that he outwardly proclaims it: "I am not a human being! I am an animal!" Which is the fundamental basis of all bigotry—that *they* are not like *us* and in fact are not even human. The Penguin is angry at his parents for having made him what he is and for then betraying him. In the film's opening sequence he is put into a Moses-like cradle and thrown into a frozen river, which becomes a sewer that empties improbably enough into the penguin house of the local zoo. His wicked polluting coconspirator is Max Shreck, played by Christopher Walken. Shreck owns, among other things, a department store—like Altman's? Or Macy's? And his name, which means "fear" in German, is the name of the actor who played the vampire in F. W. Murnau's 1922 silent film, *Nosferatu*—a not too subtle suggestion of blood-sucking.

The Wagnerian references in Danny Elfman's music and in the rubber duck that is the Penguin's preferred mode of transportation and, as Roiphe and Cooper point out, a version of the *Schwan der Scheldt* from *Lohengrin*, can't be inadvertent. The Penguin insists on a revenge that will not be limited to first-born sons but will be more general and (ha-ha!) liberal and include all children, without limitation of gender or birth order. At the film's climax, a bunch of penguins dive into the water at his bidding, which would be ludicrous—attack-penguins?—except that the reference is clearly to the swarms of rats in the old Nazi propaganda films. The target of their attack, so far as it can be determined, is not only children but Christmas. While I don't remember this from the film—I was numb by this point—the official DC Comic adaptation ("Take The Movie Home!") shows the Penguin and his avian minions singing "Silent night, violent night, all is shrill, all is blight . . ." so that we cannot mistake the fact that their target is Christianity and, indeed, Christ himself.

Dismayed yet convinced, I am trying to figure out what any of this may mean. Theatergoers mostly didn't get it—I think. Or rather I hope. Until now, they have been kept relatively calm with the antics of a Schwarzenegger, a Willis, or a Mel Gibson and a Danny Glover team, showing up the deficiencies in intellect and courage of recognized authorities and bureaucrats who have annoyed them in their welfare offices, schools, housing projects, parole offices, and prisons. Those fantasy exercises allowed audiences to suppose that none of their troubles were their own fault, but rather the result of the system itself. The message of *Batman Returns* is that all our ills arise from the work of some small but evil bunch of rich and powerful people who are different from us—not quite human, beasts, vermin—and are therefore after blood, wanting to kill our children and our God.

I remember, at a press screening of *Exodus*, hearing what was probably the best one-liner in the history of movie criticism. As we were coming out of the theater, somebody behind me (I preferred not knowing who this smart-aleck was and not having to envy him) said, "This movie will set the Jews back four hours." I hope it's no worse than that this time.

Meanwhile, on a cheerier front, I am delighted to report that *Monster in a Box* is a glorious romp. What we have here is nothing spectacular in conventional movie terms. There's a man seated at a table, and he's talking. We see his hands and his face, and the table and the microphone and the glass of water. Also on this table is a 1900-page eponymous monster, the novel he has been working on for years and years. This novel is actually out and available, *Impossible Vacation*, but the movie is by no means a promotion for the book, except in the most roundabout way. Those of us who are interested in Spalding Gray's curi-

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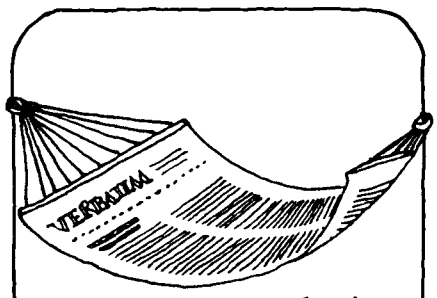
ous narrative gifts are likely to follow up the movie with at least a look at the pages, which are also pretty good and which also depend on the almost incantatory magic of repetition and variation, set-ups and pay-offs, the rhythm of theme and riff, departure and return. It is a brilliant piece of talking, better by far than *My Dinner With André*, better than Garrison Keillor's more self-conscious performances that tended too often to deteriorate into either sentimentality or mere shtick. Richard Pryor at his best was able to manage something like these extended turns, but he was angrier and more stand-up comic in tradition and intention. Gray is not out for laughs, although he gets them often enough and is even able to do a quick joke, as when he is describing his first encounter with the Sovetskaia Hotel and its endless vistas of red carpeted hallways. ("It's Eloise goes to Moscow!") What matters much more is the wry, self-deprecating, mildly but always engagingly agonized personality that binds together these bizarre and disparate pieces of culture and experience into something that seems very much like a life. And what else is there for movies or books or any other kind of narrative art to convey?

Gray is almost naked. He just sits there and talks. A couple of times he stands up. There is a musical score coming in from time to time, and there are occasional sound effects. Changes in camera angles and cuts provide a kind of punctuation so that he can do two different sides of a conversation and make clear which person is talking. But mostly it's just him, talking. He is, for instance, at a writers' colony at McDowell, up in New Hampshire, in one of those secluded cabins, and he says, "I write, I walk, and I drink, and I eat, and I walk, and I write, and I write, and I walk, and I drink, and I drink . . ." and he is getting arthritis in his writing hand, and he is losing sight in his left eye, and with a book like this, which is about his mother and is, after all, Oedipal, he thinks, "There goes the first eye."

This is the second of his brilliant *tours de force*. The first was *Swimming to Cambodia*, which was also a performance piece first and then a film. This time, he has meetings with various producers and agents, travels to Central America for Columbia Pictures, and goes to the Mark Taper Forum on an NEA grant to do theatrical interviews with people from Los Angeles who are not in the movie business—such people being difficult to find out there. But the adventure is never as important as the adventurer, which is what Gray counts on. As his alter ego protagonist in the novel explains, "We all had fun as our wonderful summers blended together in Sakonnet, although I could never lie on the beach again without thinking of Bali. Then after a while I just accepted that as part of my life, accepted that forever I would always be a little bit in the place that I was not, a little bit in my body and a lot in my imagination." When he calls this work a huge "solipsistic, narcissistic, self-indulgent pile of poop," he is, obviously, relying on us to disagree with him. And even though we know that we're being snookered, we know that he knows this too, and is apologizing for it. Yet we're all having far too good a time to do anything but what he is counting on. Having been so richly entertained for so long—there isn't a dull patch in this wonderful film—it's the very least we can do.

David R. Slavitt is a poet and novelist living in Philadelphia.



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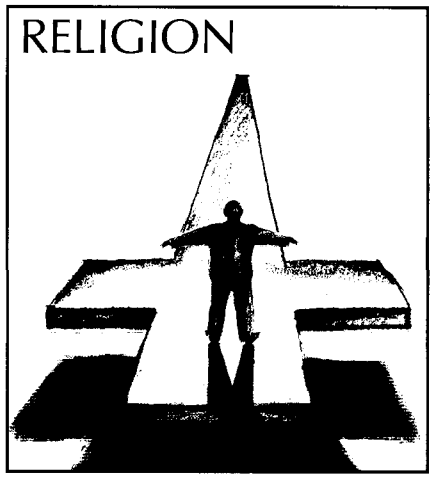

Anna Mycek-Wodecki

Religion as a Social System

by Jacob Neusner

To study any vital religion is to address, as a matter of hypothesis, a striking example of how people explain to themselves who they are as a social entity. Religion as a powerful force in human culture is realized in society, not only or even mainly in theology. Religions form social entities—churches, peoples, "holy nations," monasteries, or communities—that, in the concrete, constitute the "us," as against the "nations" or the "them"; and they carefully explain, in deeds and in words, who that "us" is—every day. To see religion in this way is to take religion seriously as a means of realizing a specific conception of the world.

But how do we describe, analyze, and interpret a religion, and how do we relate the contents of a religion to its context? These issues of method are worked out through the reading of texts and, I maintain, through the serious analysis of the particularity and specificity of texts.

Religion may represent itself as tradition, meaning the increment of the ages. It may also come forth as a cogent statement, as a well-crafted set of compelling answers to urgent questions. A religious tradition comprises whatever the received sedimentary process has handed on, whereas a religious system addresses in orderly fashion a world view, a way of life, and a defined social entity. Each process of thought obeys its own rules.

For example, the pentateuchal system

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starts fresh, defines first principles, and augments and elaborates them in balance, proportion, and, above all, logical order. True, the Pentateuch draws upon much older materials in its reformulation by Ezra in 450 B.C., but the reformation of these materials into a system imparts to all details the message of the system as a whole. In a traditional process, by contrast, we never start fresh but only add—to an ongoing increment of knowledge, doctrine, and mode of making judgment—our own deposit. To take one striking example of such a traditional process, the formulation of the traditions surrounding Jesus into the Gospels exhibits traits of agglutination and conglomeration; nothing is lost, but new materials find a place. This accounts for the complexity of the Gospels' accounts of Jesus. (Yet we need not call into question a single detail; each account can be right, so far as the traits of a tradition are concerned.) Tradition is, therefore, by its nature exegesis, not fresh composition.

The opposite process we may call systematic, in that the intellect, starting as if from the very beginning and unbound by received perspectives and propositions, constructs a freestanding and well-proportioned system. It is like the difference between a city that grows naturally and a city that is planned; an old scrapbook and an original composition; a composite commentary and a work of philosophical exposition.

What sort of indicator tells us that we have a system, not a tradition? A systematic and, by nature, philosophical statement or document presents its ideas as though they emanate from its authorship, rather than by alluding to—let alone citing—a prior writing, such as the Scriptures. The form of a systematic statement will ordinarily be autonomous. The discourse will begin with first principles and build upon them. The presentation of a system may, to be sure, absorb within itself a given document, citing materials here and there, but the authorship in such a case imposes its own program and its own problem upon received materials. An example of a systematic statement's use of received materials is Matthew, chapters two and three, which argue that events in the early years of Jesus' life fulfilled the promises of prophecy.

Matthew appeals for his explanation of the life and authority of Jesus to genealogy, beginning with Abraham, running through David, proceeding onward to Christ; this explanation is part of Matthew's larger thesis that the things Jesus said and did fulfilled what the Hebrew Scriptures ("the Old Testament") had predicted. Christianity, then, is the completion of the Old Testament. This conclusion requires the citation of various verses; these are, of course, chosen by the authorship for the occasion, and there is no pretense of reading whole passages in their "own" terms according to their "own" momentum of meaning. Matthew, rather, makes his point—which is part of his larger program and polemic—through an incidental, if important, allusion to prophecy.

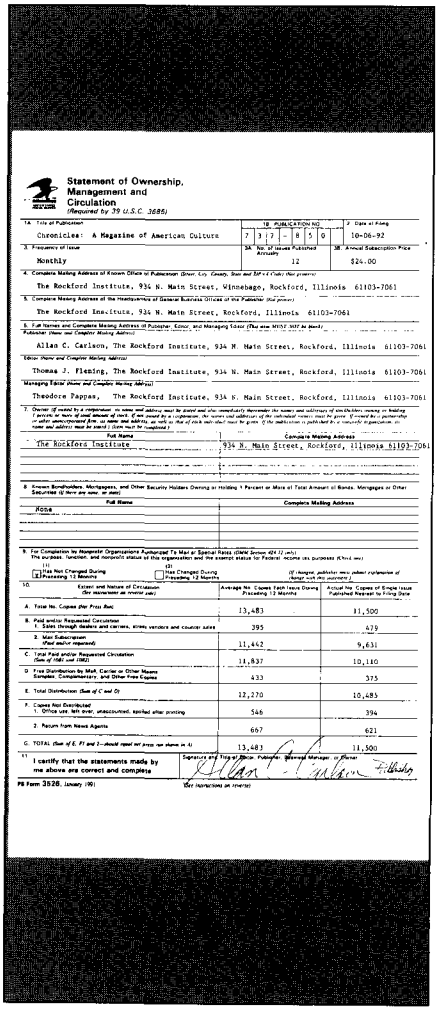
How do we know that a statement, a sizable composition for instance, is meant to be systematic? In a well-composed system, every detail will bear the burden of the message of the system as a whole. Each component will make, in its own terms, the statement that the system intends to deliver. In order to understand this, we must first appreciate an important distinction in the analysis of systems: that between a fact that is systemically vital and a fact that is inert.

In a well-composed system, every systemically generative fact will bear in its detail the entire message of the system, while inert facts will not. This is simply illustrated. It is clear to any reader of Plato's *Republic*, Aristotle's *Politics*, the Mishnah, or Matthew's Gospel that these writers propose to set forth a complete account of the principle or basic truth governing their subject—beginning, middle, and end. Accordingly, they so frame the details that the main point is repeated throughout. At each point in the composition the message as a whole, in general terms, will be framed in all due particularity. The choice of topics will be dictated by the requirements of the prevailing attitude and statement. According to this scheme, we can even account, ideally, for the topical components of the program, explaining (in theory at least) why one topic is included and another not. A topic will find its place in the system when only through what is said about that *particular* topic can the system make the statement it wishes to make.

I do not wish to enter into counterpart classification of Christian writings (*e.g.*, Irenaeus, Origen, and Augustine) as to their traditional or systemic identification. But I do maintain that the Bible (Old and New Testaments together) forms a system and indeed was meant to make a systemic statement, and I rest my argument on the function and purpose of the Bible as described in scholarship on the canon.

Some systems say precisely what they want on exactly those topics essential to their full statement. These are what we may call "closed systems," in that the authors tell us—by definition—everything they want us to know and—again, by definition—nothing they do not think we need to know. An open system, by contrast, requires the reader to refer not only to what an authorship states, but also to what an authorship invokes. The program is partial, the statement truncated, the system incomplete and lacking correct composition and proportion—if indeed there is a system at all. These traits will then mark a traditional, not a systemic, statement.

A traditional document (and therefore the mind and the religious system that it represents) recapitulates inherited texts, thus defining the traditionality of



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(Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685)

1A. Title of Publication	1B. PUBLICATION NO.	2. Date of Filing
Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture	7 3 7 - 8 5 0	10-06-92
3. Frequency of Issue	3A. No. of Issues Published Annually	3B. Annual Subscription Price
Monthly	12	$24.00

4. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer): The Rockford Institute, 934 N. Main Street, Winnebago, Rockford, Illinois 61103-7061

5. Complete Mailing Address of the Headquarters or General Business Offices of the Publisher (Not printer): The Rockford Institute, 934 N. Main Street, Rockford, Illinois 61103-7061

6. Full Names and Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)
Publisher (Name and Complete Mailing Address): Allan C. Carlson, The Rockford Institute, 934 N. Main Street, Rockford, Illinois 61103-7061
Editor (Name and Complete Mailing Address): Thomas J. Fleming, The Rockford Institute, 934 N. Main Street, Rockford, Illinois 61103-7061
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10. Extent and Nature of Circulation (See instructions on reverse side)	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	Actual No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
A. Total No. Copies (Net Press Run)	13,483	11,500
B. Paid and/or Requested Circulation 1. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales	395	479
2. Mail Subscription (Paid and/or requested)	11,442	9,631
C. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation (Sum of 10B1 and 10B2)	11,837	10,110
D. Free Distribution by Mail, Carrier or Other Means Samples, Complimentary, and Other Free Copies	433	375
E. Total Distribution (Sum of C and D)	12,270	10,485
F. Copies Not Distributed 1. Office use, left over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing	546	394
2. Return from News Agents	667	621
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such a writing. A systematic writing may allude to or draw upon received texts, but does not recapitulate them, except for its own purposes and within its own idiom of thought; it not only does not recapitulate texts, it selects and orders them, imputes to them a whole cogency (which their original authorships have not expressed in and through the parts), and expresses through them its deepest logic. While the tradition is ongoing, the system begins exactly where and when it ends. From the Pentateuch to the Bavli, Judaic authorships presented not stages or chapters in an unfolding tradition but closed systems, each one of them constituting a statement that followed upon a sustained process of rigorous thought and inquiry, applied logic and practical reason.

I maintain that tradition and system cannot share a single throne and that a crown cannot set on two heads. Diverse statements of Judaisms constitute not traditional but systemic religious documents, with a particular hermeneutics of order and proportion—a reasoned context—to tell us how to read each document. Because we cannot read these writings in accordance with two incompatible hermeneutical programs, I argue in favor of the philosophical and systemic, rather than the agglutinative and traditional hermeneutics.

The whole, then, works its way out through exegesis, and the history of any religious system—that is to say, the history of religion writ small—is the exegesis of its exegesis. And the first rule of the exegesis of systems is the simplest: *the system does not recapitulate the canon; the canon recapitulates the system.* The system forms a statement of a social entity, specifying its world view and way of life in such a way that, to participants in the system, the whole makes sound sense and is beyond argument. So from the beginning words are not of inner and intrinsic affinity, but (as Philo would have us say) *the* Word—the Word awaiting only that labor of exposition and articulation that the faithful, for centuries to come, will lavish at the altar of the faith. A religious system presents a fact not of history but of immediacy, of the social present.

The phrase "the history of a system" is an oxymoron. Systems endure—and their classic texts with them—in that eternal present they create. They evoke precedent; they do not have a history. A system relates to context, but exists in an enduring moment (which, to be sure, changes all the time). We capture the system in a moment; the worm consumes it an hour later. That is the way of mortality, whether for us one by one or for the works of humanity in society.

Jacob Neusner is Distinguished Research Professor of Religious Studies at the University of South Florida and life member of Clare Hall, Cambridge University.

John in New York

by Gloria G. Brame

It will be dark now, down that darkling street,
as you plow homeward from furtive trysts,
free of frailty, toward hearth's redemption,
saying and believing, O, *the flesh is weak.*
Now your shirtsleeves brush sooted buildings
against whose backs she leaned and wept,
your heels fill grooves that her feet etched,
for all the city's her body and scent.

The path to gray apartments will divide;
you'll knock on someone's door and another
will take you inside. Limbs will confuse
like golden chains at a casket's core.
The light her gems reflect tricks the architect
at the center of his labyrinthine plan.
The more you know, the less you feel:
you stand alone with your infidelities.

From one woman to another to another woman,
Wife, Mistress, Mother, she'll reclaim your sins
and give them grace. In flight, you'll see amid lime
and granite, sure, climbing towers taller than man,
consubstantial with him; but her strong legs
are the girders of your dreams, your monuments.
What sends you away? O, your flesh is weak,
and the city's gifts are seductive and real.

Beyond the walls of the city of man
simmers promise of a cleansing, rising sun
whose every gentle shadow blankets every harm,
forgives trespass on hallowed ground sealed by cement.
Even as she vanishes before your restlessness,
she recalls what you confessed. The imperceptible
smiles of pavement cracks check your steps.
Forever stranger, in betrayal loving, always ardent.

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Anna Mycek-Wodecki

The Formidable Evil

by Andrei Navrozov

Sovietology Past and Present

Reviewing a polemical pamphlet of mine on Sovietology published by the Claridge Press in London, Arnold Beichman assured readers of the May issue of *Chronicles* that I am "a serious man." The bulk of his review, however, supported the proposition that I am a conspiracy nut, a proposition whose originality the reviewer may well have overestimated. In my life it is a familiar presence, as an American tourist's exclamation to the effect that his little niece can paint better than that is a familiar presence to the guards at the Musée d'Orsay.

It all comes down, then, to the question of what constitutes a platitude, or rather to the relationship, if any, between conformity and truth. This question, asked by John Stuart Mill more than a century ago, has never been more relevant. Precarious as the freethinker's position was, even in a society as free and steeped in the culture of adversarial debate as Palmerston's England, in our totalitarian age the exogenous conformity pressing upon him is added to the endogenous conformity of the kind Mill described. In this climate, all forms of intellectual resistance appear Quixotic.

Though threatened with extinction, the freethinker continues to do what every artist is born to do—to tell the whole truth as he sees it. Of necessity, this whole is only a fragment, yet it is invariably different from any of the fragments that comprise the conformist half-truth on offer at any given moment. "Not the violent conflict between parts of the truth, but the quiet suppression of half of it, is the formidable evil," wrote Mill, as "truth itself ceases to have the effect of truth by being exaggerated into falsehood."

Using a classic example, back in the headlines of late, it is easy to see that to a nonconformist mind the only thing that makes the Warren Commission's official theory of the Kennedy assassination fall short of a perfect falsehood is that some 73 percent of Americans disbelieve it. Yet it is not uncommon to see this sizable majority described, in White House press releases as well as in newspaper headlines across the United States, as a bunch of conspiracy nuts. I have no data to indicate how many Americans disbelieve the official half-truth of the August Coup of one year ago in Moscow or grasp intuitively that the notion of a Soviet collapse has been exaggerated into a falsehood by the pressure of exogenous as well as endogenous conformity. But let us assume, for argument's sake, that this number is as infinitesimal as Mr. Beichman would have us suppose, although my own contact with people in all walks of life suggests otherwise. How, then, is a lone individual to challenge the dominant orthodoxy that the West tacitly accepts? His only hope of pardon, perhaps, lies with the aesthetic aspect of dissidence as a spectacle, striking as it does a sympathetic chord in the soul of an increasingly totalitarian yet still vestigially Christian bystander. The good scout Sid, in other words, has not altogether displaced Tom Sawyer in Aunt Polly's affections.

Of the outcome of the August Coup, an English journalist wrote in the *New Statesman* that

> commentators were reduced to marvelling at the "amazing irony" that an obviously impossible coup attempt by hardliners had destroyed the hardline cause. The same people would, I can only suppose, consider it "amazingly ironic" that Lee Oswald died shortly after John Kennedy.

And, moving on to the larger issue of the conspiracy theory in question,

> The semi-intellectual who drawls "Personally, I prefer the cock-up theory" belongs in the same category of smug recyclers of received wisdom as the child who shuns sweets because "Daddy says they'll rot my teeth." Both are motivated by a juvenile herd instinct, a desire to achieve sophistication through imitating the self-policed banality of one's betters.

It is difficult for me not to recognize in this Mr. Beichman himself, the "hardline skeptic about events in Russia for a very long time" who concluded his review of my pamphlet as follows:

> But with the failure of the August coup I became convinced (or was I taken in?) that there was no going back to communism or to KGB conspiracies against the free world. I still think a wait-and-see attitude about events in the new Commonwealth is fully justified. But that is a far cry from saying that fulfillment of the KGB's global totalitarian strategy is still the aim of those who are now the country's political elite. . . .

The aesthetics of dissidence require the Western freethinker, whose existence in "the free world" is made more perilous than ever by that world's ongoing blind convergence with totalitarian polity, to pass an exam on Mill's differential calculus of truth and conformity. For habitual dissentients, in whom this calculus is inculcated from the cradle as it was in my Moscow childhood, no such exam is necessary. Thus, while Western "experts" endorse the half-truth of a Soviet collapse in order to facilitate the lucrative technology transfer welcomed by the right or to boost expenditure of the "peace dividend" hailed by the left, my own freethinking milieu in Moscow is quite without these motivations. As a result, to skeptical eyes, the West's "wait-and-see attitude" is no different from the political platitudes of ten, twenty, or fifty years ago, and the global strategy of their own "political elite" is as real as it ever was.

The "experts" with whom I took issue in my pamphlet are men of the right. This is because the conformist motivation of the left is old news, a plat-

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itude, the proverbial mote that, in the twilight of our totalitarian century, only an editor of *Commentary* or *National Review*, utterly oblivious to the beam protruding from his own eye socket, can cheerfully discern. By contrast, the intellectual capitulation of the right in the face of a modernized, 21st-century totalitarianism is without precedent, at least since the day when the right first became the oppositionist minority that it in a sense remains. It is the right's cry of "Victory!" in the face of its cause's whimpering surrender that drew my disobedient attention to Sovietologists like Walter Laqueur and Robert Conquest.

It is anecdotal that Mr. Beichman, a "research fellow" at the Hoover Institution where Robert Conquest is a "senior research fellow," doubts that "Messrs. Conquest and Laqueur have been taken in by a KGB conspiracy," because if they have "what can account for the fact that these tough-minded historians who were not taken in during the Stalinist and post-Stalinist decades seem now to have lost their heads in the *Gorbachevshchina*?" In his enthusiasm to conform, Mr. Beichman forgets that the venerable Lao-Tze of *National Review* wrote *The Great Terror* in 1968, when he was a man of 50, and that even the bland *Power and Policy in the U.S.S.R.* had not appeared until 1961. As for the equally tough-minded neoconservative Confucius, Walter Laqueur had maintained a becoming silence until 1956, when a Soviet oligarch conspired to seize power by discrediting his predecessor and by making disparagement of him socially acceptable on both sides of the Iron Curtain. The sardonic question one ought to be asking, then, is "Why should Messrs. Conquest and Laqueur *not* now be taken in by a KGB conspiracy, if that is what it is, when they have spent two decades of their rational lives either in blissful ignorance of Stalin's conspiracy or in active participation in Khrushchev's?" It may be recalled that the future author of *On Liberty* was arrested for pamphleteering at 16, a tender age at which Messrs. Conquest and Laqueur may be assumed, for lack of evidence to the contrary, to have been loyal Leninists or loyal Trotskyites, just as their less agile contemporaries in the West were loyal Stalinists or loyal McCarthyists.

Today one need not be a conspiracy nut to realize that these movements represented the dominant conformity of certain times and places and that those who marched along with them or tacitly accepted their leadership of half-truths and falsehoods are permanently disqualified as freethinkers. Yet today a thinker must risk becoming known as a conspiracy nut, or at least as something more substantively controversial than a fellow of the Hoover Institution, to be free enough to realize that the canard of a Soviet collapse is the dominant conformity of these times, even as the systems that once stood for almost cartographic realities, East and West, socialism and capitalism, communism and fascism, are converging into a uniform "New World Order" with distinctly totalitarian features.

Twenty years ago I could read Conquest's, or for that matter Solzhenitsyn's, variations on Khrushchev's "de-Stalinization" theme without a grimace, because the localized conformity they represented was still at odds with another, far more uniform, mendacious, and vast. Two years ago I could hardly read Conquest's new book on the assassination of Kirov or Solzhenitsyn's Vermont proclamations without reflecting that their platitudinizing to the tune of Gorbachev's "openness" belonged in *Pravda* or *Izvestia*—or, more shattering, that it also belonged in the *New York Times* and *National Review* and *Commentary* and every other periodical in which only pre-1953 news is noteworthy and to which conspiracy nuts need not apply.

As I write this, I see that an opinion column by my father is carried by *Izvestia*, circulation four million, every Thursday. I admire this freethinker as I admire Mill, yet I would not conclude, nor would he have me conclude, that this anomaly proves that the spirit of *On Liberty* has alighted on Yeltsin's Russia generally or on *Izvestia* in particular. Nor would seeing his opinions in the *New York Times*, as I have seen my own, alter the fact that unless there reemerges in the United States a medium for adversarial and equipotent debate at least of the kind that existed in Palmerston's England, such occurrences will remain anomalies. Unofficial versions of history, born out of the human impulse to know the whole truth, will continue to circulate in the form of single-spaced letters, xeroxed leaflets, Washington rumor, and computer gossip, at least until the impulse itself is extinguished by indifference. Conspiracy nuts will continue to live with the name, given by those whom Mill called "conformers to commonplace, or timeservers for truth" to those whom he saw as "afflicted with the malady of thought." As Mill warns in *On Liberty*:

> And thus is kept up a state of things very satisfactory to some minds, because, without the unpleasant process of fining or imprisoning anybody, it maintains all prevailing opinions outwardly undisturbed, while it does not absolutely interdict the exercise of reason by dissentients afflicted with the malady of thought. A convenient plan for having peace in the intellectual world, and keeping all things going on therein very much as they do already. But the price paid for this sort of pacification, is the sacrifice of the entire moral courage of the human mind.

In a climate like this, which any reader of *Chronicles* will immediately identify as milder and more temperate to the freethinker than the Establishmentarian atmosphere in the United States today, would a man not be insulting his own intelligence as well as that of his peers by insisting that a "conspiracy theory"—such as the axiom that the Kennedy shooting was an inside job or that Gorbachev organized the August Coup against himself or that the *New York Times* would rather find dirt on Pat Buchanan than on George Bush—be "proven"? In a court of law where equipotent and adversarial representation of all sides of the argument is against the rules, can a man do more than holler "*Cui bono*"? In a world without a free press, where individual historians, scholars, and writers with no motivation save their natural stubbornness can ill compete with representatives of powerful intellectual corporations—like Laqueur's Center for Strategic and International Studies or Conquest's Hoover Institution—can any man hope that the whole truth will out to save civilization in the 11th hour?

Yes, but only if the man is a courageous freethinker. A conspiracy nut, for short.

Andrei Navrozov writes from London and is author of The Coming Order: Reflections on Sovietology and the Media *(Claridge Press).*

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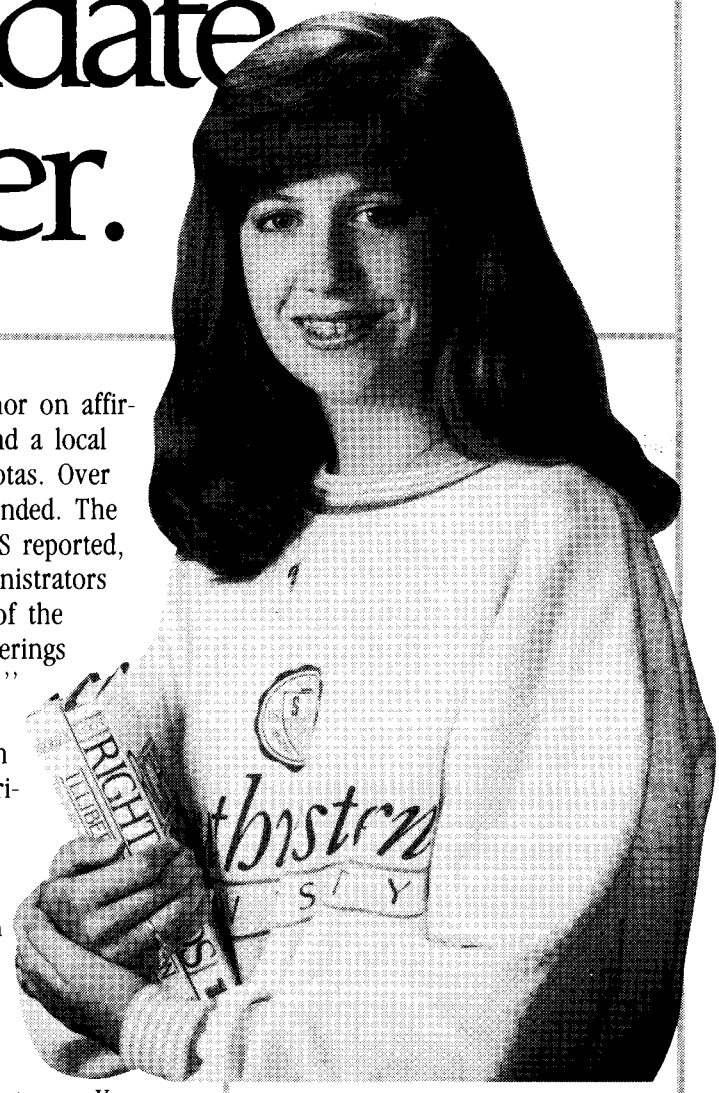
She Didn't Let The Dean Intimidate Her.



Jennifer Imle is a junior at Southwestern University in Texas. Like many students she believes that important campus issues should be discussed. Issues like rigged admissions policies based on race.

But when she displayed a Young America's Foundation poster attacking such policies she ran into a firestorm. She was attacked as a racist by campus activists and she was ridiculed by professors in class.

Dean of Students, Roger Ballou, took one look at the poster and said, "This must go!" Then he circulated a memo saying the poster smacked of white supremacy. He said that Jennifer and other conservatives should publicly debate their decision to display the poster.

But Jennifer wanted the issues raised by the poster to be debated, not whether she had a right to display it. She called Young America's Foundation for help. The Foundation helped by sponsoring a debate at the school between Dinesh D'Souza, a bestselling author on affirmative action, and a local proponent of quotas. Over 350 students attended. The NEW YORK TIMES reported, "University administrators said it was one of the largest such gatherings in their memory."

Jennifer Imle fought back, won respect and contributed to the debate on vital issues on her campus. You can too.

We're helping students with speakers, advice and literature. Last year Young America's Foundation sponsored hundreds of lectures by conservatives on campuses all over the United States.

If you need our help, we want to hear from you. Or, if you want to help Young America's Foundation to assist students like Jennifer Imle, please contact us.

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